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THE STORY OF THE RENAISSANCE

BY

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PREFACE

THIS is an attempt to put a large subject into a relatively small book, and the task of compression has been the more difficult because I have done my utmost to avoid the dry style of the mere epitome and to preserve the living interest of my story. The special student of particular aspects of the Renaissance will miss many names and facts which he rightly regards as important. But I will ask him to remember that this is not an exhaustive essay, or series of essays, on particular aspects, but only a broad survey of the general field. My controlling aim throughout has been to indicate the origin, nature, inter-relations, and effects of some of the most potent of the forces which co-operated in bringing about the great movement of transition from the mediæval to the modern world.

In writing of the Renaissance one is bound at times to touch upon controversial matters. In regard to these, I have, of course, taken my own line, and have dealt with things as I see them. But personal opinions have nowhere been obtruded.

Considering the limitations of my space, I have deemed it wise to confine attention almost entirely to the story of the Renaissance in Italy, France, Germany, and England.

William Henry Hudson.

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THE STORY OF THE RENAISSANCE

CHAPTER I

The Renaissance in General

I.—WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE RENAISSANCE?

It is not unusual to figure civilisation as an incoming tide, advancing almost imperceptibly in wave after wave of recurrent effort. The image is not a very good one; but if it be permitted, then we are justified in speaking of occasional tidal waves which, with a tremendous sudden inrush of energy, carry the water far up the shore. Such a tidal wave occurred in what we know as the period of the Renaissance.

It is the purpose of this little book to give some account of what was accomplished in this wonderful age of newly awakened activity, fresh beginnings, and fundamental change in life and thought. It will therefore be desirable at the outset to put the question—What do we mean by the Renaissance?

Various answers suggest themselves according to the point of view we choose for the moment to adopt. The institutional historian fixes his attention on the birth of a new political consciousness with the decline of the mediæval idea of the Papacy and the Empire and the spread of the sentiment of nationality throughout

Europe. The historian of society is mainly concerned with the birth of new social conditions accompanying the breaking up of the regime of feudalism and chivalry, the growth of commerce, and the beginnings of modern industrialism. The scientist emphasises the rediscovery of nature, the opening up of the world by maritime exploration, the founding of astronomy, anatomy, physiology, medicine, and the establishment of the true scientific method. For the historian of thought the principal interest of the Renaissance lies in the abandonment of the old theological scholasticism and the rise of the spirit of free rational inquiry. To the student of religious evolution, the Renaissance suggests the Reformation; to the lover of art and literature, the recovery of the masterpieces of pagan antiquity and the rebirth of the classic world.

In dealing with the Renaissance, therefore, the specialist in any given department of historical research will naturally lay stress upon those particular features of it which have supreme interest for him. To get a complete conception of the subject, the views of all the specialists have to be combined. The Renaissance is not to be defined in terms of such and such changes in social organisation, economic conditions, philosophic activity, religious doctrine, æsthetic and literary tastes. It was, as Walter Pater put it, "a complex and many sided movement." Many causes co-operated in producing it. Its results were so numerous and so far-reaching that to explain them fully would be to sketch the history of the modern world.

Yet despite this complexity and many-sidedness, we must be careful to think of the Renaissance, not as a number of disconnected movements in different directions, but rather as one general comprehensive movement manifesting itself under diverse aspects. The

use of a single term in which all these aspects are gathered up is therefore not only convenient but also legitimate. The Renaissance meant many things. But, beneath them all, it meant a fundamental change in men's attitude towards themselves and the world. Through the mere shifting of their point of view, phases of life were revealed to them of which hitherto they had never dreamed, and, what is equally important, long familiar phases were brought before them under a totally fresh light. A new spirit was everywhere at work. Its transforming power was shown alike in politics and society, in science, philosophy, and religion, in literature and art. In Prof. Jebb's words, "the Renaissance, in the largest sense of the term, is the whole process of transition in Europe from the mediæval to the modern order."

To assign a single date for the opening of its history is therefore impossible. The middle ages came to an end at different times, not only in different countries, but also in different fields of activity. But the vital connection among the various component movements of the Renaissance is shown by the fact that they all fall within the same period. Roughly speaking, we may say that it began definitely in Italy towards the close of the fourteenth century with what is called the Revival of Learning; that it spread thence to other countries, notably Germany, France, and England, the spirit of classicism meanwhile blending with other influences different in origin but equally powerful; and that the transformation of life which resulted went on rapidly for more than two hundred years. It is therefore with the period between the close of the fourteenth and, let us say, the early decades of the seventeenth century that we shall here chiefly have to deal. It must not, indeed, be assumed that at the point last named the

history of the Renaissance actually comes to an end. It may fairly be contended that the Renaissance of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries was carried on by the movement of enlightenment in the eighteenth; that the French Revolution was only another stage of it; that we are involved in it even to-day. It is certainly beyond question that the influences which the Renaissance generated, however much they may have changed their forms, have been and still are active forces in the shaping of modern civilisation. For practical purposes, however, we have to mark history off into artificial divisions; otherwise, an historical study would have neither beginning nor end. Though we shall often be obliged to look before and after, our own subject will therefore be considered mainly within the limits assigned.

I.—THE RENAISSANCE AS THE DISCOVERY OF THE WORLD AND MAN

The word Renaissance was originally employed with reference, first to Brunelleschi's restoration of classic architecture as a substitute for Gothic, and then to the revival of Greek and Latin literatures. To begin with, therefore, it was applied only to the rebirth of classical antiquity. We now use it in a larger sense as meaning an entire renewal of life in all its branches. In the period of the Renaissance, we say —thus justifying such extension of the name—all men's powers were reborn.

I have spoken of this great renewal as the work of a fresh spirit manifesting itself in different ways in different fields of interest and activity. What was the nature of this spirit? It is not difficult to answer. It was, in a word, the spirit of emancipation. In the

last analysis, the Renaissance was the revolt of the whole man—mind and body alike—against the despotism of creeds, traditions, and arbitrary authority. It was the assertion of the right of the individual to himself and his own life. It marks "the modern rebirth of the individual soul."

To appreciate the full significance of this, we must remember that the whole mediæval system had been fatal to the free development of individuality. In his relations with the State, the guild, the Church, the mediæval man was merely a unit in an organisation and existed only for its sake. The basis of feudalism was subordination. The great mediæval Church was the supreme incarnation of the despotic spirit; arrogantly laying claim to divine right, it sought to coerce the world into doing only what it ordered and believing only as it taught. Thus not independence but submission was proclaimed as the first of the virtues. The ethical accent was thrown, not upon self-realisation, but upon self-repression. Man was cramped in on every side. He did not belong to himself. He lived on sufferance. The condition of all his activity was that he should be an instrument; of all his thinking, that he should be an echo. One curious result which followed in the domain of literature and art is worth attention—the almost complete want of individuality in the works produced, the absence of the distinctively personal note. Everywhere we meet with what Brunetière calls the spirit of anonymity. There is nothing in poem or painting to reveal the character of the poet or artist behind it. One *roman* is just like another *roman;* one mystery-play just like another mystery-play; one trouvère or minnesinger just like another trouvère or minnesinger; one Madonna or Crucifixion just like another Madonna or Crucifixion. Individual

genius had been swamped by tradition and convention.

Thus, though there was immense intellectual activity during the middle ages (for the supposition that they were ages of mental stagnation is wholly incorrect), such intellectual activity produced little of permanent value. Conditions rendered progress almost impossible. For hundreds of years, as Taine says, men went through the motions of marching; but they were only marking time. Carlyle, in characteristically vivid phrase, describes the mediæval philosophers as "spinning dervishes," gyrating with amazing swiftness, but ending where they began.

While thus destructive of freedom of thought, dogmatic despotism further proved hostile to individuality and progress by divorcing man from nature. A great wall was built between his mind and the outer world. A story is told of a mediæval student who, "having detected spots in the sun, communicated his discovery to a worthy priest. 'My son,' replied the priest, 'I have read Aristotle many times, and I assure you that there is nothing of the kind mentioned by him. Go rest in peace, and be certain that the spots which you have seen are in your eyes and not in the sun.'" * This is a parable as well as an anecdote. In every direction authority, creed, tradition shut men off from the facts of life. There can be no intellectual progress while thought is thus separated from the outer reality. The mind was forced to feed upon itself and upon inherited formulas, and the result was sterility.

The central feature of the Renaissance, then, was rebellion against this intellectual tyranny and all that it implied. Men felt the need for freedom in thought

* Lewes, "History of Philosophy," ii. 95, 96.

and speculation. They grew impatient of the leading-strings in which they had long been compelled to walk. Life opened itself out to them anew in all its vast and varied possibilities, and they were eager to enter into their great heritage. In particular, they were getting tired of living "in the furnished lodgings of tradition"; of behaving like timid children afraid to say or do anything but what they were told. They became conscious of a fresh desire to go behind what others had said about things, and to see things for themselves. Bacon presently proclaimed that the first condition of progress is to set aside authority and go straight to nature. In this, as we shall learn later, his teaching represents the full fruition of the spirit of the Renaissance in the intellectual field.

Hence the Renaissance was not merely a renewal of mental activity. It was also a vital change in all the conditions of such activity. This was accompanied by an equally profound moral and religious change. The lay spirit arose in vigorous protest against sacerdotalism, priestly domination, and especially the asceticism and other-worldliness which had long been thrust to the front in the ethics of the Church. Reaction set in against the old repressive view of human life. The awakening of personality was, as Burckhardt puts it, the great sign of the new time; and this awakening of personality meant not only, as we have said, the assertion of the individual's right to himself, but also the assertion of his right to the world. Philosophy, literature, art, even religion, were thus brought out of the seclusion of the cloister and put into living relationship with secular things. Beauty was no longer a snare, nor pleasure a sin, nor the world a fleeting show, nor ignorance acceptable to God as a sign of submission and faith, nor were abstinence

and mortification the only safe rules of conduct.* The mediæval view of life was repudiated root and branch, and a view which was the antithesis of it in almost every detail was established in its place. Men went out into the world with a passionate determination to clutch at everything it contained, to avail themselves of all its opportunities, drink deep of all its knowledge, enjoy all its pleasures, make the most of themselves. Hence the era of the Renaissance was particularly the era of great personalities; and hence, too, these great personalities were marked, not only by their amazing vitality and vigour, but also by their extraordinary amplitude and versatility. It is bewildering in these days of narrow specialism to read of the achievements of some of the typical men of that age of giants. Michelangelo was sculptor, painter, architect, engineer, poet. The many-sidedness of Leonardo da Vinci almost passes belief. These were, if typical, still exceptional men, it is true; but the diversity of interest and faculty shown by many of their less-known contemporaries is surprising only in a somewhat smaller degree. An eager desire to overleap all limitations and to master life at every point was a characteristic of this period of emancipation.

We can thus understand the full meaning of Michelet's often-quoted description of the Renaissance as the discovery of the world and man. In using it we mean that the Renaissance was a return to nature and humanity; the restoration of the bond between them; on the one hand, an enormous growth in the knowledge of the external universe; on the other, the re-awakening of aspirations and emotions which had long lain dormant. We mean, too, that as part cause and part effect of all these changes in mental and moral

* Symonds, "The Age of the Despots," chap. i.

climate, there was a great revival of the spirit of self-dependence, inquiry, criticism, and common sense. As Luther wrote concerning the rise of new educational ideas: "Another world has dawned, in which things go differently."

III.—THE BEGINNINGS OF THE RENAISSANCE

We are not to suppose that the Renaissance came suddenly and as a surprise. As Michelet said, the middle ages were more than once on the point of ending before they did actually end. In other words, there were various premonitions of the Renaissance before the great movement definitely began.

Perhaps the first faint suggestions of the dawn after the complete darkness which had settled over Europe in the sixth century are to be perceived about the beginning of the eleventh. An Italian writer* has propounded the theory that the stir of new life which now became apparent was the direct result of an intellectual rebound from the terrorism by which men's minds had long been paralysed. The general belief had been that the year 1000 would bring with it the end of the world, and that Jesus would return to judge the quick and the dead. This belief was intensified by the famines and pestilences which were specially numerous at the time, and which were read as portents of the approaching catastrophe. A wave of religious frenzy swept over Europe. Throngs of pilgrims flocked from all parts to the great shrines of Christendom, some to reach their destinations, some to perish on the way, some to be crushed to death in the immense crowds which gathered at the entrances of the sacred spots. Here and there, as a congregation knelt in silence before the

* Bartoli, "I Precursori di Renasciamento," p. 19.

elevated Host, an army of Flagellants would march along the streets, lashing their naked bodies with knotted cords dripping with their blood, and with hoarse voices repeating their monotonous cry: "Dies iræ! dies iræ! the end of the world is at hand!" Thus over distracted Europe dawned the eleventh century. Men woke up to find that the clouds had not been rent asunder to make way for the heavenly Judge; that the graves had not burst to yield up their sheeted dead; that the solid earth was still beneath their feet, and that they themselves were standing firmly on it. Then, in the spirit of relief so admirably satirised by Swift,* they entered as it were upon a fresh lease of earthly existence. The energies which had been absorbed in eschatological visions were now available for mundane things.

It is possible that Bartoli's description both of the terrorism of the tenth century and of the subsequent recoil from it is exaggerated. It is at least certain that the opening of the eleventh century witnessed a renewal of secular interests and activities. These were still further stimulated, a little later, by the first crusades. Originating in the union of religious fanaticism with the mediæval love of fighting and adventure, these religious wars in the long run produced, directly and indirectly, results which their promoters never for a moment anticipated. By bringing the western nations into contact with the various beliefs and practices of the east, they tended to break down intellectual barriers and to broaden men's minds. Bred in the school of theological ignorance and intolerance, the Christian warrior went to the Holy Land convinced that the "paynim" was a brutal savage. He found himself to

* "True and Faithful Narrative of what passed during the General Consternation . . . Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday last."

his amazement in touch with a civilisation in many respects superior to his own, and with enemies who were his equals in courage, chivalrous sentiments, and culture. The contrast between the heathen Saladin and the cardinals of his own Church was calculated to give the thoughtful invader an unpleasant shock; cases are on record of the conversion of Christians to the Moslem faith; it is significant in a more general way that the Knights Templar suffered much from reports of their heresy resulting from their known sympathies with Saracenic ideas. Boccaccio's famous story of the three rings, setting forth the divine origin of Mohammedanism as well as of Judaism and Christianity, is a striking illustration of the tolerant spirit which an intolerant enterprise had helped to foster.* Moreover, the crusades served to open up the east to western trade; they encouraged navigation, extended the area of peaceful relationships with alien peoples, created new needs and introduced new commodities. In this way they gave an enormous impetus to commerce and the commercial spirit. Nor is this quite all. While thus, by helping to spread the commercial spirit, they were indirectly influential in undermining feudalism, by the great destruction they entailed on the old nobility, who perished in large numbers in these holy wars, they directly contributed to the same important result.

From the eleventh century onward, then, the historian is able to trace the feeble workings of forces which were in antagonism to all that we epitomise under the term mediævalism. With the thirteenth century we reach what may fairly be called the spring-time of the Renaissance. This was a season of great mental

* "Decamerone," t. 3. Lessing adapts this story to his own purposes in "Nathan der Weise," in which the picture of the Templar's spiritual pride breaking down by contact with Jew and Saracen in Palestine is historically correct.

stir and eagerness; it was the age of Roger Bacon, Albertus Magnus, and Raymond Lully; of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus; of St. Francis of Assisi, Cimabue, and Dante; architecture flourished in it; the founding of universities at Oxford, Cambridge, Siena, Naples, Padua, Salamanca, and Lisbon was a token of its widespread enthusiasm for intellectual things. But the world has often to wait a long time for the fulfilment of the promise of spring. The thirteenth century has been aptly described as a "precocious age." It was, in fact, too precocious. The social, political, commercial, and intellectual conditions did not yet exist to justify and make fruitful its efforts towards a larger life. Those efforts therefore proved abortive, and a reaction towards mediævalism followed. Even the universities, at first the centres of mental activity, soon became the very strongholds of scholasticism, and developed so powerful a tradition on the conservative side that they were later to become notorious for their obstinate adherence to the old modes and methods of thought, and their dogged resistance to the new spirit under all its forms.

It must be clearly understood, however, that as the promise of the thirteenth century was greatest in Italy, so its fulfilment there was by no means so long delayed as in other parts of Europe. In Italy the later fourteenth century took up the work which the preceding century had begun; north of the Alps the intellectual impulse was not felt till the century following. We have thus to recognise Italy's priority in the great revival; and it is worth while to glance at certain outstanding causes of it because they serve to indicate the conditions which were requisite for the success of the Renaissance as a whole.

The social and political life of Italy was singularly

favourable to the growth of personality and the mental vigour and independence which were aspects of it. The communes or free towns of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries were homes of civil and intellectual liberty. In them the individual citizen had the largest opportunity for self-realisation and self-assertion. Whatever might be the nominal form of government, these communes were markedly democratic in spirit. "*La carrière ouverte aux talents,*" was a phrase which in varying measure held good of them all. This democratic spirit was largely the result, and was everywhere the accompaniment, of the immense development of industry and trade. Their widely extended commercial enterprises brought these societies into peaceful intercourse with all sorts of different peoples, and this tended inevitably to breadth, flexibility, and freedom of thought. One result was the spread of a robust positive temper and habit of mind strongly hostile to dogmatism, sacerdotalism, and the priestly attitude towards life. Here also, as elsewhere, commerce was the uncompromising foe of feudalism and all its influences. The upper classes of the Italian city-commonwealths thus differed greatly from the upper classes in countries beyond the Alps. They were business men, in constant and intimate touch with the working population of the city; they were town men, whose lives were passed amid civic interests rather than in coarse sports and rural interests. At the time when, shut up in their gloomy fortresses, the feudal aristocracy of northern Europe knew nothing of domestic refinement and little even of comfort, the Italian gentry were already enjoying a home life which had much to commend it in the way of decency and grace. These circumstances had a direct influence on manners. Wealth brought leisure; it bred a taste

for luxury; it provided ample opportunity and means for the gratification of that taste. Rich men began to devote a portion of their time to intellectual and artistic pursuits, and their zest for such things was further stimulated both by public admiration and by the rivalry of others situated like themselves. Finally, the extremely bracing atmosphere of these little communities, their internecine controversies in which passions ran high, their fierce contentions with other cities, all helped to make life full, varied, intense; to kindle curiosity, energy, and ambition; to bring out of every man whatever he had in him; to encourage and emphasise both the growth of personality and its unrestrained expression. It is extremely significant that the new movement began earliest and was strongest in communities in which the industrial spirit was most pronounced. It was not feudal Naples nor sacerdotal Rome which was the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance. It was democratic Florence.

Viewed chronologically, the Renaissance begins in Italy with the revival of the Latin and Greek classics. With this, then, our own story might fittingly open. It will, however, be more convenient to glance first at a few of the inventions and discoveries which did much to create the spirit and atmosphere of the new age.

CHAPTER II

The Age of Discovery and Invention

I.—THE INFLUENCE OF MARITIME EXPLORATION

I DO not purpose in this chapter to retell at length the wonderful story of what was achieved during the period of the Renaissance by scientific genius and the spirit of enterprise. I am concerned only to show, with the help of a few specially interesting examples, how discoveries and inventions contributed to the general movement of the Renaissance, and by co-operating with the other forces of the time furthered the great transition from the mediæval to the modern order.

We may conveniently begin by considering the intellectual results produced by the opening up of the world by maritime exploration.

A taste for travel had been aroused by the crusades, the direct influences of which had been greatly reinforced by the marvellous tales which returning warriors and pilgrims brought back with them from the Holy Land. The commercial consequences of these religious expeditions, upon which I have already touched, soon turned the mere love of adventure into practical channels, especially in Italy, where from the first their financial aspects had been in the ascendant. It was therefore natural that regular voyages of discovery should have begun as early as the thirteenth century, and equally natural that the most prominent

part in them should have been taken by Italians. The great era of geographical discovery did not, however, open till towards the close of the fifteenth century, when the rapid extension of the Mohammedan power, which, as we shall presently see, had not a little to do with the revival of learning, became a chief cause also of fresh nautical enterprise. By blocking up the great highways of communication between Europe and the Orient, the Turks threatened with commercial disaster the Italian cities which had grown rich through their eastern trade. The question of the possibility of finding new routes thus became urgent, and the result was that here and there practical men began seriously to consider the chances of reaching India by striking out to the west. Convinced that this could be done, the Genoese sailor Christopher Columbus, under commission from the King and Queen of Spain, in 1492 sailed across the Atlantic and, firmly persuaded that he had attained his object, actually discovered the continent of America.

Taken in conjunction with other commercial and maritime activities, this discovery led to a controversy regarding their respective rights between the Spaniards, who had thus first established a footing in the western world, and the Portuguese, by whom the Atlantic coast of Africa had already been explored as far as the Cape of Good Hope. Alexander VI. settled this dispute by a bull drawing an imaginary line—Columbus's line of no magnetic variation—down the middle of the Atlantic, and assigning all newly found territory east of such line to Portugal and west of it to Spain. It was, therefore, in the immediate interests of Portugal to secure as large a field as possible by eastward exploration. This led to the great voyage of Vasco da Gama, who, on November 20th, 1497, doubled the Cape of Good Hope,

and in May of the following year reached Calicut on the west coast of India. Under the terms of the papal bull a distinct advantage was thus gained for Portugal by this extension eastward of the area of discovery.

If Spain were to hold her own against her rival it was now necessary that she should show as good a title to the commercial exploitation of Asia by bringing Asia into the field of westward operations. By this time the error in which Columbus died had been exploded, and it was well known that what he had supposed to be the coast of India was in fact the line of a great continent—America, as it was already called—lying between Europe and Asia. Ferdinand Magellan believed that a passage could be found through or round this continent which would lead by the westward route to the Moluccas. Though Portuguese by birth, he resented the ill-treatment which he had received at the hands of his king, and accordingly laid his plans before Charles V. of Spain, by whom they were favourably entertained. Magellan's expedition in five ships left Seville in August, 1519; made direct for Patagonia; threaded the strait which still bears his name; and so entered upon the vast ocean that, on account of the calm weather which he enjoyed while sailing across it, he called the Pacific. He reached the Philippines in April, 1521, and there he was killed, either by savages, or, more probably, by mutineers among his own men. But the work of the expedition, not yet complete, was carried out by his intrepid lieutenant, Sebastian del Cano, who, crossing the Indian Ocean, and doubling the Cape of Good Hope, reached Spain in September, 1522, having accomplished one of the great feats of history—the first circumnavigation of the globe.

These three great voyages of discovery were fol-

lowed by many others, almost every one of which added something of importance to men's fast-growing knowledge of the world in which they lived and of which hitherto they had been so ignorant. But the exciting narrative of maritime adventure must not here be pursued any farther. We have now only to ask in what ways the new knowledge thus acquired helped to change the currents of history and to shake the fabric of mediæval thought.

Even in the political sphere its effects were soon apparent. The new geography destroyed at a blow the old international and commercial relationships, and the balance of power was shifted. Thus far the Mediterranean had been the centre of the world, and riches and influence had been the natural heritage of the nations which bordered upon or had easy access to it. With the revelation of the vast fresh sources of wealth which had now been brought within the reach of the ocean-faring peoples, commercial supremacy passed from Italy to the nations which had the control of Atlantic navigation—to Spain, France, and England. It is especially important to note that it was largely through the immense development of her trade which was thus effected that England was brought into the great stream of Renaissance influences. Such development meant the widening of relations with the outer world, with all the increase of energy and ambition which this entailed; the accumulation of wealth, and of the power, the leisure, and the tastes which follow in its train; the decay of the feudal system and the rise of the middle classes. The new conditions which resulted from the interplay of all these factors were obviously favourable to intellectual progress.

From our point of view, however, the direct and indirect influence of geographical discovery on thought

and speculation is more interesting than its influence on politics.

In the first place, the truth about the world revealed by the great explorers came into conflict with the dogmatic authority of the Church. Mediæval opinions concerning the shape of the earth had varied; some speculators thought it flat, some concave, while a few —among them Albertus Magnus, Isidore of Seville, Vincent of Beauvais, and Dante—accepted the idea of its sphericity. Even these last, however, rejected as unscriptural the idea which had been advanced by certain pagan writers, such as Cicero and Pliny, that it was inhabited on the other side. In this they followed the lead of the Fathers, who, with few exceptions, held that the doctrine of the antipodes was a damnable heresy, and of Pope Zacharias, who formally pronounced it "perverse" and "iniquitous." The arguments from Scripture which were adduced against it give a good idea of the mental habits of the ages when theology reigned supreme. "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Very well, says Augustine; as the early preachers certainly did not go to the antipodes, it is evident that the antipodes do not exist. Moreover, how could the inhabitants of the other side of the globe behold Christ on His second coming, as it is foretold that *all* the nations of the world shall do? Even in the age of Columbus himself the theory in question was overthrown by the Spanish theologian Tostatus in a characteristic syllogism: "The apostles were commanded to go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature; they did not go to any such people as the antipodes; therefore there are no such people as the antipodes." So much for theological antagonism in the abstract. It had

also a practical side. Heretical views on the subject were in part responsible for Peter of Abano's condemnation by the Inquisition in 1316, and when, in 1327, Cecco d'Ascoli was burned alive in Florence, his belief in the antipodes was one count in the charge against him. The great explorers not only settled once and for all the controversy about the shape of the earth, but proved that there were races of men living where the theologians declared that none could exist—races, moreover, unaccounted for by their scriptural theory of the partition of the globe among the three sons of Noah. The damnable heresy of the Fathers and Zacharias's "perverse" and "iniquitous" opinion were thus shown to be true, and the absurdity of the claim of the Church to be the final arbiter in matters of science was set in its right light. An immense impulse was thus given to the anti-dogmatic spirit. Ecclesiastical prestige was badly shaken. Scientific speculation was greatly encouraged.

While, however, the direct effect of geographical discovery upon thought was thus extremely important, its indirect effect was even more so. The minds of men were quickened to a sense of the vastness of the world which they had deemed so little, and to the realisation of what was after all one of the most significant of facts—the fact, namely, that they were living in an age of progress and not in an age of stagnation. A feeling of wider interests and a distinct heightening of the general consciousness inevitably followed. All life became larger, richer, more engaging, and the imagination was stirred by dreams of its as yet unrealised possibilities. The coins of Spain were stamped with the Pillars of Hercules, and beneath were the words "Plus Ultra" ("More is beyond"). Image and phrase were alike symbolical of the ardent,

adventurous, unsatisfied temper of the time. "More is beyond!" Returning travellers had strange tales to tell of

> "Moving accidents by flood and field,
> And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
> The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
> Do grow beneath their shoulders";

and writers like Sir Walter Raleigh might well make their pages blaze with promises of wealth vast enough to fire the lust of Sir Epicure Mammon. Yet much of the world was still unexplored, and what might not presently be found to lie just beyond the limits of the known? The fountain of youth, perhaps? El Dorado? Prospero's Island? The lost Atlantis?

In such an age of expanding horizons it is not surprising that here and there men's thoughts should become prophetic, and that strange facts should beget even stranger fancies. One work, the special importance of which is denoted by its very title—Sir Thomas More's "Utopia"—is avowedly inspired by the revelation of the new world in the west. Its point of departure is Amerigo Vespucci's Latin narrative of his four voyages—a book which, says More, was then "in every man's hand." The hero of More's romance, Raphael Hythlodaye, had, we are told "joined himself" to Amerigo "for the desire that he had to see and knowe the farre Countreyes of the worlde," and had been one of the twenty men whom the explorer, according to his own statement, had on his fourth voyage left behind with arms and six months' provisions in a fort on the coast of Brazil. His story then runs that after their chief's departure Raphael and several of his companions had proceeded on further adventures, and had ultimately reached the hitherto unknown land of Utopia (or Nowhere). Then follows More's famous

detailed description of his ideal social state—an aristocratic republic, where no private property exists, nor any of the absurdities of European political and ecclesiastical systems, where religious toleration of the widest kind prevails, and the business of life is conducted on a basis of pure reason. The practical bearings of the book, whether as a satire or as a programme, need not now detain us. Its interest for us here lies in the fact that, though of course largely fashioned on Plato's "Republic," it was also specifically indebted to that current of new ideas and speculations about humanity which had been set in motion by geographical discovery. For the same reason importance attaches to another utopian romance of just a hundred years later —Bacon's "New Atlantis." The fiction here is of a boat-load of mariners who, lost in the South Pacific Ocean, reach by happy chance the unknown island of Ben Salem, where they find a race whose civilisation has far outdistanced the petty achievements of Europe. Bacon's imagination is chiefly occupied with a splendid dream of the future progress of science and the results to be attained by its application to life, and of this I shall have something to say in a later chapter. But the direction which his utopianism takes does not greatly matter. The point is the close connection of such utopianism with that general spirit of curiosity and adventure which the great discoveries had done much to stimulate.

The influence of these discoveries on thought is illustrated in a somewhat different way by the speculations of Montaigne. That great Frenchman, who may be described as the very incarnation of the inquisitive temper of his age, and to whom nothing human came amiss, was profoundly interested in the wider bearings of the facts which exploration had now made the

common property of the world. Keenly alive to the infinite diversity of human nature, he was quick to seize upon the significance of the contrast between the things we take for granted and accept without protest simply because they are conventions of our own social state, and those other very different things which, ludicrous and even shocking as they may seem to us to be by reason of their unfamiliarity, appear equally proper and rational to the men who are bred in them. He had learned much of the new worlds from books; he had talked from time to time with seamen and merchants who had crossed the Atlantic, and often with a man in his own employ who had spent some ten years in the Brazils; and everything that he had read and heard about man in his savage condition tended to make him increasingly critical in his attitude towards civilisation. All sorts of questions took shape in his fertile mind. Is civilisation perhaps, after all, only an abnormal growth, an unfortunate departure from the original and benign intention of Nature? How much has man gained by his wealth, and commerce, and culture? How much has he lost by the sacrifice of his primitive simplicity? Such speculations represent the under-side of Renaissance utopianism and its visions of human perfection. So, too, arose that contrast between the state of nature and civilisation—between primitive man and the distorted product of an artificial society—which was later to become in the hands of Rousseau so potent an agency in the development of revolutionary thought.

Nor was it so very long before the fancies of More and Bacon and the speculations of Montaigne began to assume a practical form. Reaction against the cramping tyranny of tradition and convention, a growing sense of the irrationality of the existing state of things,

and an ever-rising demand for greater freedom sent many an independent and adventurous spirit across the Atlantic to that new world in which, the old burdens being left behind, life could become at once simpler and ampler. The great westward migration, fraught as it was destined to be with consequences of enormous importance to the whole world, was the result of many causes. We have here only to connect it with the mighty inrush of new ideas, the freshly awakened aspirations and enthusiasms, the craving after unrealisable ideals, which were among the characteristic marks of the great age of geographical discovery.

II.—THE INFLUENCE OF THE NEW ASTRONOMY

Maritime exploration revealed a new earth. Astronomy followed with a reconstruction of the universe.

The history of the successive discoveries and generalisations by which the old astronomical theories were exploded and the foundations of the modern system firmly laid would carry us beyond the proper limits of our present inquiry. But the beginnings of the great transformation fall within our period, and these have interest for us here because of their connection with the general movement of thought.

The old astronomy, though commonly called the Ptolemaic after the Alexandrine, second-century scientist Claudius Ptolemaeus, by whom it was expounded in detail, was in fact accepted by most of the eminent physicists of ancient times. It was indeed little more than an attempt—and, all things considered, a singularly successful attempt—to reduce current observations and common-sense conclusions to a coherent system. It conceived the earth as the fixed centre of the universe, round which revolved, from east to west, in concentric

circles, and in a period of, roughly speaking, twenty-four hours, a series of seven enveloping heavens, each containing a luminous spherical body: namely, the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. An eighth heaven, beyond all these, carried the "fixed" stars; while to explain away various difficulties which closer observation had brought to light, and to complete the arrangement in accordance with the metaphysical habit of the time, later speculation assumed a ninth sphere, called the "crystalline" (a chief function of which was to account for the precession of the equinoxes), and a tenth—the "Primum Mobile"—from which divine energy perpetually flowed out into all the other parts of the universe. In this final form of the ten spheres the system before us may be described as the Alphonsine rather than the Ptolemaic, for it was authoritatively taught by the famous royal astronomer Alphonso X. of Castile (1252-84). But such details do not now concern us. The point to be emphasised is that the old astronomy was geocentric and therefore anthropocentric. It made the earth—man's dwelling place—the pivot of the universe, and relegated sun and moon, planets and fixed stars, to a position of subordination to it.

Such was the system which practically controlled all thought till well on in the sixteenth century. Here and there attempts had been made to revive the speculations of some of the Greek philosophers regarding the rotation of the earth round the sun; one notable advocate of these being the well-known German theologian, Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa (1401-64). But the accepted theory was first definitely challenged by Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543), who is justly regarded as the father of modern astronomy.

Copernicus did not indeed emancipate himself from

the tyranny of the old dogmas so completely as is popularly supposed. A vast amount of ancient error was mixed up with his theories; his arguments were often purely metaphysical; his conclusions were frequently unsound. But his great achievement—the achievement which we have in mind when we speak of the Copernican astronomy—was nothing less than revolutionary. He shifted the centre of the solar system. With him astronomy became heliocentric. The earth was deprived of its pre-eminence in creation. It ceased to be the pivot of the universe, and took its humble place among its companion planets in its yearly journey round the sun.

The history of the treatise in which these new conceptions were set forth—"De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium" ("On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Orbs")—is itself illuminating. Finished at least as early as 1530, it was not given to the world till a dozen years later. Copernicus evidently dreaded the storm which its publication would probably precipitate, and from year to year held it back. When, finally, in 1542, he was prevailed upon to send it to the press, it was accompanied by a dedication (almost certainly the work of a friend), to Pope Paul III., which was abjectly apologetic in its tone. He lived just to see the first copy of the book, which was brought to him as he lay on his death-bed, but not long enough to witness the fulfilment of his fears concerning its fate. The Roman Church, it is true, treated it for the moment with quite remarkable forbearance; it was not till 1616 that it was put on the Index, where it remained till 1757. But the Protestant theologians were soon in arms against it. Luther denounced its author as a fool whose arrogance was shown in his flat contradiction of the teachings of Holy Scripture, while

Melanchthon would willingly have invoked civil authority to stamp out its iniquitous doctrines.

The conflict with the Roman power which Copernicus had thus evaded was, however, only deferred, and the brunt of it had to be borne nearly a century later by his great successor Galileo Galilei (1564-1642). Some of his own wonderful discoveries had already been viewed with suspicion by the custodians of religious orthodoxy; but it was his bold and aggressive advocacy of Copernicanism, the truth of which he had amply proved by original investigation, which finally brought him under the ban of the Church. Galileo was not content with maintaining the heliocentric theory against the arguments of the theologians. He had the temerity to attack their pretensions, and even to contend openly against the authority of the Scriptures in scientific matters. Upon this, and at the instigation of the Dominicans, he was summoned to Rome, where he was formally accused of promulgating the dangerous doctrine that the sun is stationary and the earth a planet revolving about it. Threatened with imprisonment in the event of his refusal to yield, he promised that henceforth he would neither teach nor defend such heresies. It was at this point that the Inquisition proceeded to take action in regard to the Copernican system in general, denouncing it as "that false Pythagorean doctrine utterly contrary to the Holy Scriptures," and interdicting both Copernicus's own book and Kepler's epitome of its theories. For sixteen years all went well; Galileo lived tongue-tied and in peace, and even enjoyed the personal favour of the Pope and of various great dignitaries of the Church. Then, in 1632, unmindful of his promise, he wrote a dialogue in which once more he appeared as the vigorous supporter of the Copernican system. A few

months later he was called upon to surrender himself to the Holy Office on charge of heresy. He was now in his seventieth year, and his health was failing. None the less he was compelled to go through all the stages of a protracted and rigorous trial. In the end he was informed that in order to obtain remission of the penalties due to his offences he would be required to kneel and abjure by solemn oath the impious doctrines of which he had been guilty. In this supreme moment, and faced by torture and a death by fire, the old man's courage failed, and he signed his recantation. The well-known story—which is probably only a legend—adds that, as he laid down the pen, having thus declared the immobility of the earth, he was heard to murmur: "*E pur si muove*" ("And still it moves"). His books were prohibited, their printers punished, he himself was further condemned to indefinite imprisonment in the dungeons of the Inquisition. This sentence was, however, commuted, and the aged scientist was allowed to retire to Arcetri, near Florence. There he passed the remaining years of his life; there he was visited by Milton; there, already totally deaf and blind, he died in his seventy-eighth year, still formally a prisoner of the Inquisition, which, not satisfied with what it had done to the man while living, denied his body the privilege of burial in consecrated ground.

It is easy to understand why the new astronomy greatly increased the disturbance of mind which geographical discovery had already produced. Men had been surprised by the revelation of their ignorance in respect of the world in which they lived. The entire reversal of all their inherited notions concerning the central importance of this world in the general scheme of things was followed by an even sharper intellectual

shock. Man found himself suddenly displaced, his old domestic relationship with the universe was destroyed, and the sense of insignificance which now took possession of him started strange questions regarding his purpose and destiny. Moreover, the steady advance of science, in this as in every other department, inevitably tended to bring discredit upon the Church, and to help the emancipation of the intellect from the trammels of ecclesiastical authority. Obstinately clinging to the stereotyped errors of yesterday in face of the growing knowledge of to-day, the official representatives of religious orthodoxy had committed the fatal blunder of identifying their creeds with theories of the universe which science now proved conclusively to be untenable. The theories collapsed, and with them all confidence in the infallibility of those who had supported them, other arguments failing, by recourse to the dungeon, the rack, and the stake. The general spread of the anti-dogmatic spirit was thus accelerated; leadership in thought passed from the cleric to the layman; and the individual inquirer, standing before the mysteries of the universe, claimed for himself the right to set aside tradition and the systems of the schools, and to follow truth wherever it might lead. Galileo strikes the new note when in writing to Kepler, in 1579, about Nature, he asserts: "When we have her decrees, authority goes for nothing; reason is absolute."

III.—THE INFLUENCE OF THE PRINTING PRESS

Inventions no less than discoveries played their part in the dissolution of the mediæval order and the rise of the new modes of life and thought. We might go through the long catalogue of the practical appliances which, during the period of the Renaissance, were either

first introduced or at least first turned to general service, and show how each one of them in some direct or indirect way aided the workings of the spirit of change. Thus, for example, the common use of the mariner's compass, which seems to date from the beginning of the fourteenth century, rendered possible the epoch-making voyages of the great explorers; while without the telescope, which was not made effective till the early years of the seventeenth century, astronomical discovery could hardly have advanced beyond its infancy. In considering the results produced by maritime adventure and astronomical inquiry, we have, therefore, to remember their ultimate dependence upon the inventions named. Another practical agency of immense importance was gunpowder, which, though known long before, was first employed in European warfare, it is usually held, by Edward III. in the Scotch war of 1327, and afterwards on the field of Crécy in 1346. By revolutionising the whole art of war, gunpowder led to so many and such varied consequences that even the most careful analysis of them would almost certainly leave something to be added. Here we may just note among the most obvious that, by rendering unsafe the mighty strongholds in which they had formerly been able to resist all enemies, it undermined the power of the feudal nobility; and that, by changing the method of fighting and discounting the prowess and courage of the individual knight, it hastened the breaking up of the habits and ideals of chivalry.

We will here, however, confine our attention to the greatest of the inventions of this time—the printing press.*

* It should be noted that the really effective work of the printing press in turn depended in part upon another invention of about the same time —cheap paper. The coincidence in time between the two is one of the most remarkable in history.

A PRINTING PRESS OF 1507

Enlarged from the printer's mark of Iodocus Badius Ascensius, used on the title-pages of various books printed by him, 1507–1535

Concerning the origin of the art of printing—by which we really mean the art of printing by movable types—there has been endless controversy. We are, however, safe in saying that it took its rise in Germany about the middle of the fifteenth century. The earliest documents actually reproduced by movable types, of the date of which we can be certain, are, oddly enough, two indulgences, which were issued at Mainz in the autumn of 1454. The printer of one of these must have been Johann Gutenberg, and of the other, Johann Fust. Between these two men, then, the honour of priority must clearly lie, while on the whole it seems probable that Gutenberg has the greater claim, since there is reason to suppose that for some years before the date named—as early, perhaps, as 1440—he had been experimenting with the new art, first in Strassburg, and later in Mainz. Whenever introduced, however, this art soon began to spread from Mainz to other centres, and its progress was so rapid that before the century was out there were sixteen master printers at work in Strassburg, twenty-two in Cologne, seventeen in Nürnberg, and twenty in Augsburg. Before this other European countries had been invaded. Printing was carried into Venice by a Frenchman named Jensen, or Jenson, and into Rome by two Germans, Schwynheym and Pannartz, while Florence from the first depended upon native talent in the persons of the goldsmith Bernardo Cennini and his two sons. An edition of Lactantius issued in 1465 by the two Germans just named from their press at Subiaco, before their settlement in Rome, seems to have been the first book printed on Italian soil. In 1470 printing began in France, when the first press was set up at the Sorbonne. Three years later, at the sign of the Golden Sun, in Paris, the first Bible printed in France was produced. It has been pointed out, how-

ever, that owing to the slow progress of the new learning in France down to the close of the fifteenth century the books issued were not, as in Italy, editions of the classics, but for the most part romances in the vernacular, volumes of devotion, and manuals in the old style of scholastic philosophy.* In England printing began with William Caxton, who learned the art while engaged in business as a mercer in Bruges. Before he left that city he had already passed through the press there a "Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy"—the first book printed in English. Then about the end of 1476 he set up his wooden presses within the precincts of the Abbey at Westminster. It has been alleged, indeed, that Caxton had his predecessors on English soil—that movable types had been employed at Oxford as early as 1468. There is no substantial evidence of this; but, even if it were proved, the claim of Caxton to rank as our first English printer is hardly shaken, for regular press work did not begin at Oxford till 1478 or 1479. Cambridge did not follow till 1521, but then it gained this distinction, that it was at the Cambridge press, apparently, that Greek types were first used in England.

Of the importance of the invention of printing it would be difficult to speak extravagantly. For once Victor Hugo's heavily loaded emphasis seems to be entirely justified when he describes it as the greatest event in history.† More than any other single agency —and the significance of this statement must be sought in the fact that it was through its co-operation that other agencies became effective—it was responsible for the

* Tilley, "Literature of the French Renaissance," p. 158.

† See the characteristic chapter—"Ceci tuera cela"—in "Notre Dame de Paris" (v. iii.), "ceci" being the printed book, the symbol of the awakening new spirit; "cela," architecture, regarded as the typical expression of human genius and aspiration down to the beginning of the fifteenth century.

great European transition from the mediæval to the modern order. It is said that when Gutenberg took the model of his press to a wood-cutter in Strassburg, the latter, knowing nothing of its purpose, exclaimed: "But it is a wine-press that you are asking me to make for you," and that Gutenberg replied: "Yes; but a wine-press from which shall soon pour out the most wonderful liquor which ever yet flowed forth to quench the thirst of man." The anecdote is probably apocryphal; in any event, it is certain that even if Gutenberg had been endowed with the prophetic instinct ascribed to him, still he could never for a moment have foreseen the immense revolutionary potency of the new invention. The history of five centuries has amply proved that the printing press is the most democratic organ the world has ever known, and, in Symonds's phrase, "the most formidable instrument of the modern reason." Those who to-day would wish to set back the hand upon the clock, should begin with a determined attempt to compass its destruction, or at least to curb its activity.

Consider in how many ways the press tended from the beginning to popularise knowledge and speculation, discredit the mediæval caste-system in scholarship, destroy the practical monopoly in learning long enjoyed by the clergy, and undermine the intellectual prestige of the privileged classes. So long as the only books were manuscripts they were necessarily rare and costly, and therefore in large measure the luxuries of the favoured few. No wonder, then, that the wealthy and noble collector bitterly resented the vulgar machine which enabled a big miscellaneous reading public to share with him in treasures which hitherto he had kept to himself. In the meantime, public libraries were found only in the universities and a few other institutions, and to these all students in quest of knowledge had to

repair. But such libraries were, of course, quite insufficient for working purposes; and, as no student possessed any books of his own, all instruction had to be given through the spoken words of the teacher, who laboriously dictated both text and commentary. The printing press began the decentralisation of scholarship by impairing the power of the universities; it changed the method of instruction by putting the book in place of the lecture, or at least adding it to the lecture. Intellectual barriers were thus broken down; acquisition was facilitated; and, in particular, the emancipation of the individual student from the shackles of tutelage was insured; for however great the authority of a printed book may be, it can never be so great as that of the dogmatic living teacher whose word, under the conditions of the mediæval class-room, was taken as final, and from whose conclusions there could be no appeal.

Chiefly, however, the supreme importance of the printing press is to be recognised in the enormous part which it played in the dissemination of facts and ideas. The shop of each master printer was, as it were, the modest fountain-head of mighty streams which, flowing out perpetually, carried with them far and wide the wisdom of the past and the boldest speculations of the present. Intellectual exclusiveness was destroyed once and for all; the humblest man who could read became a citizen of the new republic of letters; and a tremendous impulse was thus given to the spread of the lay spirit. Do we need a concrete illustration of the power of the press in the age of the great revival? One lies ready to hand in the history of the Reformation. When the Sorbonne complained to Erasmus that his edition of the New Testament had fostered heresies, that great scholar replied: "You should have spoken sooner. It is now scattered over Europe in thousands of copies."

Gutenberg, as Victor Hugo put it, was the precursor of Luther. It was the printing press which turned a Wittenberg quarrel into a European revolution. It gave wings to Luther's own thoughts; it secured that general diffusion of the Bible without which the Protestant movement of the sixteenth century would have proved abortive.

This very short chapter on a very large subject will have served its purpose if it has helped to indicate the importance of the discoveries and inventions of the Renaissance period to the student of the intellectual and religious history of the age. We are now prepared to consider that rebirth of the world of classical antiquity which is commonly called the Revival of Learning.

CHAPTER III

The Revival of Learning

I.—THE TWO-FOLD SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING

How much knowledge of classical literature survived in Western Europe during the Dark Ages is a question which cannot well be answered in general terms, for the amount of it varied greatly in different times and places. The rather popular theory that it disappeared altogether—that, as Pope puts it,

> "A second deluge Learning thus o'errun,
> And the Monks finished what the Goths begun"—

is flatly disproved by the facts. Vergil, Ovid, Horace, Cicero, Juvenal, Statius, were never wholly neglected, and in the great monastic libraries of the Continent—at Fulda and Corvey in Germany, St. Gall in Switzerland, Monte Cassino in Italy, Fleury and Cluny in France—these and other Latin writers had a place. But at best even Latin scholarship was extremely meagre and was confined to the very few; while, except for a rare student here and there—like Roger Bacon—Greek was practically a forgotten tongue in the west. Plato was little more than a name; Latin translations, made first from the Arabic, though later from the original text, alone gave currency to the thought of Aristotle; Homer was known only through a bald epitome in Latin verse. Thus, though to talk of the total disap-

pearance of classical literature in mediæval Europe is to generalise too sweepingly, we are still safe in saying that such literature had ceased entirely to be a vital factor in moulding thought or shaping ideals. For, let us always remember, the spirit of classical antiquity had been lost even more completely than its literature. It was impossible for the mediæval student to apprehend the essential meaning of a Latin or Greek writer; his habit of mind, his prepossessions, the mystical and allegorising tendency which swayed all his thinking put an insuperable obstacle in the way. This is a point upon which too much stress can hardly be laid. The powerful mediæval spirit—a spirit wholly antagonistic to that of classic times—drew all things into union with itself. In the imagination of the middle ages, Troy figured as a mediæval town, with towers and bells; Achilles, Hector, Aeneas, as knights in mediæval armour. In similar manner the very thoughts and sentiments of classical antiquity were mediævalised out of all semblance to historic reality. Classical literature, like every other subject of study, was enslaved to theology and its attendant scholasticism, and as a necessary consequence was deprived of all its distinctive virtue. Aristotle was so completely buried beneath masses of fantastic commentary that in the end the gloss displaced the text. The mediæval mania for symbolism turned subtle intellects to the congenial task of seeking hidden spiritual meanings beneath the plainest statements. Mythology became a system of types. Vergil was transformed into a prophet of Christ to the Gentiles; Christian *centos* were made out of his writings; the fourth eclogue was read as Messianic; the "Aeneid" was currently expounded as an elaborate parable of human life, a sort of pilgrim's progress in pursuit of perfection.

A barrier of ignorance and misunderstanding had thus been reared by theology between the mind of the mediæval man and that of the classic ages. The demolition of this barrier involved the clearing up of the misunderstanding no less than the destruction of the ignorance. The revival of learning must therefore be regarded as having had a two-fold significance. The study of classical literature began in earnest; Greek was recovered; enthusiastic scholars turned impatiently from the lumber of the cloisters and the schools to the poets, dramatists, philosophers of Rome and Athens. At the same time classical thought was liberated from ecclesiastical trammels; ancient masterpieces were no longer read in the interests of established dogma; they were studied for their own sakes and interpreted according to their own principles; with the result that the long-slumbering spirit of pagan antiquity was reawakened and made a living power in the living world. The race of mediæval theologians and scholastic philosophers was thus succeeded by a race of Humanists, as they came to be called—of ardent lovers of the *literae humaniores,* who saw in this more humane literature—the very phrase was a declaration and a challenge—both the highest achievements of genius and the finest instruments of education. "I go to awake the dead," said Ciriaco di Ancona, when asked the purpose of his continual wanderings in search of statues, manuscripts and inscriptions. The saying may be taken as the watchword of humanism.

It is in respect of its special place in the history of humanism that we speak of Italy as the leader of the western nations in the movement of the Renaissance. Some general reasons which go far to explain why she was nearly a century in advance of the rest of Europe in the classical revival have already been given. To

these, two others of a more special character must now be added. Through history, tradition, and language, Italy was still connected with ancient Rome; and dim memories of Roman civilisation had, as Mr. Bryce has said, been kept alive by two agencies, the Church and the law. Its geographical proximity to Constantinople also counted. When in the last decades of the tottering Eastern Empire scholars fled from its capital, it was to Italy that they naturally turned first in quest of safety and a new home. In Macaulay's eloquent language, "during the gloomy and disastrous centuries which followed the downfall of the Roman Empire, Italy had preserved, in a far greater degree than any other part of Western Europe, the traces of ancient civilisation. The night which descended upon her was the night of an arctic summer. The dawn began to reappear before the last reflection of the preceding sunset had faded from the horizon."

II.—THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN ITALY

The new age definitely begins with Petrarch (1304-74), "the first of the humanists." Remembered to-day chiefly for his Italian poetry, he was best known in his own time for his classical enthusiasm and his Latin writings. It was, indeed, upon such efforts as his unfinished Latin epic, "Africa," and his biographies of famous men of antiquity ("De Viris Illustribus") that he himself staked his reputation; it was for these, rather than for his vernacular *canzonieri,* that on Easter Sunday, 1341, in the Capitol of Rome, he was crowned laureate poet amid the acclamations of thousands of spectators. He spent much of his time in various Italian courts, where he enjoyed the patronage and friendship of Pope Clement VI., the Emperor Charles IV., King

Robert of Naples, the Viscontis of Milan, and other minor potentates. Finally, weary of the life of the great world, he retired to his country house at Vaucluse, near Avignon, henceforth devoting himself with tireless ardour to his classical pursuits. From time to time he travelled in Italy, France, Germany, Flanders, and everywhere he went the recovery of ancient manuscripts was always his principal aim. In this way he anticipated the famous bibliophiles of the next generation. Often disappointed, he was still buoyed up by hopes of some great discovery; and when success attended his labours—when, for example, he found in Liège two lost orations of Cicero, and in Florence a collection of the same writer's letters—he was transported with delight. The search for the hidden treasures of the past became indeed a passion with him, and often destroyed all other considerations. When Leontius Pilatus, bringing manuscripts from Constantinople, was shipwrecked and drowned off the Italian coast, Petrarch's regret was swallowed up in his anxiety to know whether perchance some copy of Sophocles or Euripides might have been saved. Nor was it only by his example that he influenced others in the cause of humanism. By his epistles and dissertations he spread the love of classical learning. He was a true prophet of the coming Renaissance, and did far more than any other man of his generation to prepare the way for the great revival of the century following his death.

The first-fruits of his influence are manifest in the labours of his personal disciples. One secretary of his, Giovanni Malpaghino, known as John of Ravenna, wandered for many years from town to town as an apostle of the new learning, firing others who became propagandists in their turn. Another follower, the Augustinian monk, Luigi Marsigli, made his convent

of San Spirito in Florence a centre of light for the noble young men of that city. But Petrarch's power was most directly and clearly shown in the work of his famous contemporary, Boccaccio (1313-75). Boccaccio literally worshipped Petrarch, and though only a few years his junior, looked up to him always as his master. In literary history, he, like Petrarch, owes his position to his vernacular writings, especially the "Decamerone." But here we have to do with him only as a humanist, and as a humanist he holds a high place. Careless pleasure-seeker though he was, he none the less showed himself capable of indefatigable industry in his studies; it is recorded, for instance, that, copyists being expensive and often untrustworthy, he wrote out the whole of Terence's works with his own hand. In one most important respect he outdistanced his master as Merlin outdistanced Bleys. Petrarch knew scarcely anything of Greek; an attempt which he made to master it, with the poor help of a southern Italian named Barlaam, failed, and he remained, in his own words, a child "still at his alphabet." Keenly alive to the deprivations which this ignorance entailed, he urged his friend and disciple to devote himself to Greek studies. As no grammars or dictionaries then existed, the student had to depend upon oral instruction, and teachers were rare. It happened, however, that the Leontius Pilatus just mentioned came to Italy. A Calabrian by birth, and long a resident of Constantinople, he had a practical acquaintance with the Greek tongue. This was enough to recommend him to Boccaccio, who induced him to visit Florence, gave him hospitality, and not only read Greek with him, but arranged for him to deliver public lectures on Homer. He seems to have been a most unpleasant person, repulsive in appearance, dirty in dress, disgusting in habits, morose in temper, and,

worst of all, ignorant and pretentious. But he had something to give which could be got nowhere else, and the debonair author of the "Decamerone" made the most of his opportunity. Boccaccio's knowledge of Greek was never more than superficial; but even this meant much at a time when, according to Petrarch's statement, there were not eight men in Italy who knew the language at all. In particular, he laboured hard at Homer, and, at the dictation of Leontius, wrote out a translation of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey." So imperfect was this that even Petrarch read it at first with a dash of disappointment; but it opened to him the gateways of the Homeric world, and tradition says that he died pen in hand, while annotating it. However poor Boccaccio's acquirements, then, his importance in the annals of scholarship is incontestable. If Petrarch was "the first of the humanists," Boccaccio, as Symonds says, deserves to be called "the first Grecian of the modern world."

His effort did not, however, lead to any immediate results. The real Greek revival began after his death, at the very close of the century. In 1391, a Greek of good family from Constantinople, Manuel Chrysoloras by name, passed through Florence on an embassy from the Emperor Palaeologus, who was seeking Italian aid against the encroaching Turks. Influential citizens invited him to settle there as a teacher, and offered him the chair of Greek in the university at a stipend of 100 florins a year for ten years. He accepted, began his work in Florence in 1396, and lectured there with great success, though for three years only, counting many of the most famous of the next generation of scholars among his pupils. Afterwards he taught in Venice, Milan, Pavia, and Rome, further aiding the growth of Greek studies by the preparation of an elementary Greek

grammar—the first book of its kind. His residence in Italy was justly regarded at the time as the opening of a new era in the classic revival—the era of the Hellenic Renaissance. After his death in 1415 the study of Greek went on in Italy, and especially in Florence, with ever-growing rapidity. It received an additional impulse through the great Councils of Basel and Ferrara, which, though they failed in their avowed purpose of uniting "the long-divided churches" of Christendom, brought western scholars into close relations with those of the east. The enthusiasm of the Italians naturally attracted many teachers from Constantinople, where whatever was left of Greek culture survived, and the unsettled state of that capital, hard pressed by the Turks, was a further incentive to their migration. Decade by decade, increasing numbers of Byzantine refugees thus found their way into Italy, among the most notable being Johannes Bessarion (1403-72), who was made a cardinal after his support of the cause of the Latin church in the Council of Florence; and Theodorus Gaza (1398-1478), who taught Greek at Ferrara, translated a number of Greek writers, including Aristotle, and also composed a Greek grammar fuller than that of Chrysoloras. Then came the fall of Constantinople on May 29th, 1453—not the beginning of the Hellenic revival in Italy, as is often loosely said, but rather the last term of a series of events which had brought about the gradual transplanting of Greek culture to western soil. Italy now became, in Carducci's phrase, "sole heir and guardian of ancient civilisation." In the Hellenistic movement which now went on apace, two men were specially prominent: Joannes Argyropoulos (1416-86?), who was tutor to Piero and Lorenzo de' Medici, and also reckoned Politian and Reuchlin among his pupils; and

Demetrius Chalcondylas of Athens (1428-1511), who taught at Perugia, Florence, and Milan, and whose lectures were attended by the English scholars Linacre, Grocyn, and Latimer.

Many conditions thus combined to favour the rapid spread of the influences initiated by Petrarch and Boccaccio, and with the fifteenth century we enter upon a period of immense humanistic activity in many directions. One special feature of such activity was the recovery of ancient manuscripts. The enthusiasm with which Columbus and Magellan set sail for unknown worlds beyond the seas was equalled by that with which Italian scholars went out in quest of the world of the past; and in the one case as in the other, there was always the stimulus of excitement and the anticipation of great discoveries. Almost the whole body of the now extant Latin classics was brought to light before 1450; the rescue of Greek literature involved greater labours and took the adventurer farther afield. Bibliophilism became one of the passions of the age, and there were men in whom it assumed the proportions of bibliomania. While still a monk, Pope Nicholas V. got deep into debt in buying manuscripts; as Pope, according to his first biographer, he paid no attention to price when the purchase of a coveted treasure was in question; he is said to have collected five thousand (some authorities make it nine thousand) manuscripts, and to have given enormous sums for many of them—500 ducats for a Latin version of Polybius, 1,000 florins for a Strabo, and so on. Guarino Veronese (1370-1460), who went to Constantinople to learn Greek, brought back many valuable manuscripts from the east; grief for their loss by shipwreck on the homeward voyage was so poignant that his hair turned white on the spot. Poggio Braccio-

lini (1360-1459) was even more famous as a book-hunter. During his fifty years' secretaryship to the Roman Curia, he lost no opportunity of adding to his stores. Sent in his official capacity to the Council of Constance, he gave much of his time to the exploration of the monasteries of Switzerland and southern Germany, disinterring among other things six orations of Cicero and the first complete Quintilian. In later more extended travels, even as far as England, he never lost sight of what was the real controlling aim of his life—the recovery of the buried literature of classical antiquity, though so far as England was concerned he met with little reward: our libraries, he reported, were "full of foolishness." Another noteworthy bibliophile was Niccolo de' Niccoli. A man of extravagant and luxurious tastes, whose house was filled with ancient marbles, coins, and gems, Niccolo devoted the larger part of his fortune to the acquisition of manuscripts, and ruined himself in the enterprise. It is a striking illustration of the spirit of the times that thereupon Cosimo de' Medici came to his rescue and gave him unlimited credit at the Medicean bank.

This incident reminds us that we are now in the age of the great patrons of learning. Prominent among these were several Popes, like Nicholas V., and princely rulers, like Alfonso the Magnanimous of Naples. But the most celebrated of all were the members of the Medicean family, especially Cosimo (1389-1464), his grandson Lorenzo, called the Magnificent (1448-92), and Giovanni, Lorenzo's second son (1475-1521), who, during his seven years' tenure of St. Peter's chair, as Leo X., made Rome the artistic and intellectual capital of the world. The real founder of the fortunes of this extraordinary house was Cosimo's father Giovanni, who amassed enormous wealth by banking and com-

merce. This, on his death, passed to his son, who not only increased it, but also made it the means of such political influence that for many years he was the virtual ruler of Florence. Of the intrigues and Machiavellian cunning by which, while avoiding all outward show of princely state, and respecting the forms of Florentine democracy, he and his grandson after him practically controlled the city commonwealth, we have not here to speak; nor is it to our purpose to follow the dramatic vicissitudes of the family history. However severe our moral judgment upon them, the Medicis remain among the greatest figures in the chronicles of Italian humanism. Placing their vast wealth at the service of the new learning and its exponents, they provided for the wants of scholars, collected books, founded libraries, erected public buildings. Cosimo's commercial enterprises brought him into wide relationships alike with east and west; he enjoined all his correspondents, wherever they travelled on business, to look out for manuscripts on any subject and in any language, and to procure them without regard to price; and thus, as Gibbon says, "a cargo of Indian spices and Greek books" often reached him in the same vessel. Lorenzo followed in his grandfather's footsteps. He sent the Byzantine scholar, Janus Lascaris, on two journeys into the east, in the course of which he accumulated many valuable books, some two hundred of which came from one library—that of the monastery of Mount Athos. These, however, the spoils of the second journey, did not reach Florence till after Lorenzo's death. The formation of libraries was an important offshoot from this bibliophilic enthusiasm. Cosimo's collections were the germ of the famous Medicean Library, which, later carried on and developed by Lorenzo, is still preserved in the

Bibliotheca Mediceo-Laurentiana. Niccolo de' Niccoli's accumulations at his death also passed into the charge of Cosimo, who deposited them in the Dominican monastery of San Marco, Florence, where they laid the foundations of the still existing Bibliotheca Marciana. The acquisitions of Nicholas V. were bequeathed by him to the Curia, and constituted the real beginning of the great library of the Vatican. Cardinal Bessarion presented his valuable collection of six hundred Greek and Latin manuscripts to St. Mark's, Venice.

One special achievement of the Medicis is characteristic and important enough to merit separate reference —the establishment at Florence of an academy expressly devoted to the study of the Platonic philosophy. The idea took shape in Cosimo's mind as the result of the mystical teachings of an old Greek scholar, Georgios Gemisthos, surnamed Pletho, who had come to Italy in the first place to attend the Council of Florence. It was under Lorenzo, however, that the greatest success of the institution was attained. Its most distinguished head was the famous Platonist, Marsilio Ficino (1433-99), who devoted his life to the interpretation of the master's writings, and published a treatise on his philosophy to prove that it was of the very essence of Christianity. Some idea of the ardour with which these studies were pursued may be gained from the fact that Lorenzo reorganised the solemn annual commemorative feasts, which, twelve hundred years or so before, had been celebrated by Plato's immediate disciples. These gatherings were attended by the most learned men in Italy, and after the banquet there was an open discussion of passages selected from the "Dialogues." The influence of this academy, and generally of the Platonism which it fostered, spread

rapidly through Italy and thence into Germany. Similar societies sprang up in other great Italian centres of humanism, and did much to second the work of professors and wandering teachers in the diffusion of the new learning.

Another infinitely more important agency in the classical revival has now to be mentioned. In the earlier days of bibliophilic enthusiasm, book collectors had, of course, to depend very largely on the labours of copyists, increasing numbers of whom were thus kept busy. Some of these were monks, some schoolmasters and poor scholars who were glad to add an occasional trifle to their slender earnings; but the majority were professional scribes, whose copying provided their entire means of livelihood. With the work of a large body of men, well systematised and rapidly done, the needs of a small book market were for a time adequately met. But the introduction of the printing press wrought an entire change in the Italian world of letters. The multiplication of books was immensely accelerated; this in turn created a new reading public; as a result, the area of humanism was greatly extended. The significance of the printing press in the general history of the Renaissance has already been considered. I will, therefore, pause here only to note the interesting fact that on its first appearance the new invention encountered much opposition among conservative patrons and lovers of learning, to whom popularising scholarship meant vulgarising it, and who condemned the press as a monstrous device of the barbaric Germans. Even after the hated machine had begun to make common people partakers in the treasures of literature, and had thus enabled them to encroach upon the monopolies of the very rich, Federigo of Urbino still kept thirty or forty copyists at work transcribing manuscripts, while of the

ducal library, Vespasiano da Bisticci records that "all the books are . . . written with the pen, not one printed, that it might not be disgraced thereby." Such reactionaries, however, were, of course, in a minority; the press soon broke down all opposition and carried everything before it.

The story of the early printers of Italy makes an interesting chapter in the annals of humanism. Though I cannot take the space to retell it here, something must be said about the most famous of all the great Italian printing houses—the Aldine establishment at Venice.

Its founder was Teobaldo Manucci, who, after the fashion of the time, Latinised his name into Aldus Manutius, whence he is now generally known as Aldo Manuzio. Born in 1450, he devoted himself in early life to Latin and Greek studies, and was for a time tutor in the family of the Prince of Carpi. One of his pupils, Alberto Pio, provided him with the means of executing the great plan which he presently formed: that of printing the whole of Greek literature. A few Greek books had already appeared from Italian presses, but nothing comparable with Aldo's gigantic project had yet been dreamed of. He settled in Venice in 1490, and was soon busy with the organisation of his establishment, which was something more than a printing office, for his Greek types were cast and his ink manufactured in the house, while adjoining it was a bookbinding department. Here in 1493 he began his output with the "Hero and Leander" of Musaeus, and from that time onward he prosecuted his labours with marvellous energy and unflagging zeal. He had all sorts of difficulties to contend with. He suffered much from the piratical practices of jealous rivals; strikes occurred from time to time among his men; the work of his press was twice stopped, once for nearly two

years, by war. But amid all these discouragements he persevered, and before he died in 1515—within the space, that is, of some twenty-two years—he had issued *editiones principes* of twenty-eight Greek and Latin classics. A number of Italian books, notably Dante's "Divina Commedia," also stand to the credit of the same period. After his death the work of the Aldine press was carried on by other members of the family, the establishment continuing to exist for upwards of a hundred years.

The topography of these Aldine classics has never ceased to excite the admiration of all amateurs of printing. No previous printer had used such beautiful types. In particular, Aldo was the inventor of the types called *corsivi,* or cursive, which afterwards came to be known as Aldine, and which we term italics. These are said to have been cut by his engraver on the model of Petrarch's handwriting, and they were first used in the Vergil of 1501. This work has a further claim to distinction as the first octavo volume ever issued. We can imagine its effect upon readers at a time when clumsy quartos and folios alone were known.

Aldo was not merely an industrious publisher. He was a genuine humanist, whose work was inspired by an ardent love of learning and a desire to further its interests. As he himself declared in one of his prefaces, he gloried in rescuing the classics from the clutches of the "book-buriers" (as he called the selfish collectors who wanted to keep their manuscript treasures to themselves), and in making them accessible to readers of moderate means. The astonishing cheapness of his publications must therefore be recognised as a feature of his enterprise. The octavo series inaugurated by the Vergil sold for about 2s. a volume in our money; his prices in general ranged, speaking roughly and in terms

of modern equivalents, from a shilling to half a crown. All things considered, we can scarcely be surprised that Aldo died comparatively poor.

It must not be supposed that he carried on his labours single-handed. He secured the help of numerous scholars, who collaborated with him editorially in the criticism and settlement of texts; and the foundation of his Academy of Hellenists—the Neacademia, or New Academy, as it was called—made his house one of the chief centres of Greek culture in Italy. The rules of this society were written in Greek, and Greek was the language of its meetings, in the course of which manuscripts were collated and texts and readings discussed. Many famous representatives of the new learning visited Aldo, the most noteworthy being Erasmus, who was a guest in his household in 1508, while a new edition of his "Adages" was passing through the press, and who, like many other distinguished foreigners, was made an honorary member of the Academy.

The introduction of printing ushered in the great age of Italian humanism, which found its most brilliant representative in Angelo Ambrogini, known as Poliziano, or Politian (Latin, Politianus). Born in 1454, Politian studied with the most famous Florentine teachers of the day, and at sixteen wrote Greek and Latin epigrams which even in that age of precocity aroused the astonishment of his contemporaries. A little later his translation of five books of the "Iliad" not only gained for him the proud title of "Homericus Juvenis" (the "Homeric Youth"), but also attracted the notice of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who at once became his patron. He was presently appointed tutor to Lorenzo's children, and at thirty was professor of Greek in Florence, his lectures drawing students from every part of Europe where the stimulus of the new learning

had been felt. Though he died at forty, he had long held the highest rank as a scholar. The first of the Italians to rival the Greeks in their own language, he also used Latin as a living speech and produced poetry in the vernacular as well. His epitaph describes him as the angel with three tongues.

Meanwhile, though humanism had found its first home in Florence, it soon spread thence to other parts of Italy; and when, towards the end of the fifteenth century, the city on the Arno ceased to be the centre of culture, its principal successor was Rome. Already under Nicholas V. classical studies had been greatly encouraged by the Curia, and it was with perfect truth that on his death-bed that Pope took credit for the liberality he had shown in the purchase of books, the transcription of manuscripts, and the support of learned men. His protection was in particular extended to one of the greatest of the philologists of the Renaissance —Lorenzo Valla (1405-57), who did much to lay the foundations of exact scholarship at a time when enthusiasm often outstripped discretion and ardour was a trifle impatient of accuracy. Nicholas died in 1455. The rapid growth of the spirit of epicureanism and worldliness in the papal court during the half-century which followed was distinctly favourable to pagan learning, but it was not until Giovanni de' Medici ascended the papal throne as Leo X. that the capital of Christendom was definitely transformed into the capital of classical scholarship. Though in personal conduct markedly above the average morality of his surroundings, Leo was strikingly deficient in spiritual earnestness, and with his political aims, his interest in art, his love of splendour and display, he resembled rather a great secular prince than the head and representative of a church whose kingdom was not of this world. His

chief ambition seems to have been to restore the brilliancy of his father's regime in Florence. Himself a real enthusiast in learning, he established a Greek college and a Greek press in Rome, gathered about him famous scholars from all parts of cultivated Europe, and in his practical patronage of men of letters and artists alike behaved with the utmost munificence. The glories of Rome were now celebrated throughout the world. Unfortunately, its corruption and profligacy were scarcely less notorious. During the seven years of Leo's pontificate, learning and art flourished in marvellous luxuriance; but it was the luxuriance which already suggested decay. The golden age of the Italian Renaissance ended with his death in 1521. Six years later—in May, 1527—40,000 Spanish and German ruffians of the imperial army of Charles V. were let loose in the city, and indulged in a three days' debauch of butchery, outrage, and pillage, while Pope Clement remained shut up in the Castle of St. Angelo. The sack of Rome was followed, in 1530, by the fall of Florence. These two events may be said to close the history of the Italian revival of learning.

III.—THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN GERMANY

It was fortunate for Europe and the cause of culture that fire from the Italian altar had already been carried across the Alps. In Germany, France, and England there were indeed many obstacles to the introduction of the new learning; yet when once the spirit of humanism had entered, conditions on the whole favoured its steady growth. Italy had not only led the way—she had done the heavy work of clearance as well. She had recovered the long-buried treasures of classical literature; she had laid the foundations of textual criticism; she had pro-

duced grammars, treatises, and other aids to study. The Italian leaders had thus broken ground for those who came after them; scholars in northern countries, to the enormous saving of time and effort, were able at once to enter into their labours and adapt them to their own needs. It must also be remembered that the great instrument of the printing press stood from the outset ready to hand. We shall find that it was not till the second half of the fifteenth century that the revival of learning began to make real headway in Germany, France, and England. But while it thus came so much later in these countries than in Italy, its progress was, for the reasons given, much more rapid.

In Germany a certain amount of preparation had been silently accomplished by the Brethren of the Common Life, a society devoted especially to the interests of education, whose mother-school at Deventer, in the territory of Utrecht, was the cradle of early northern humanism. But even towards the middle of the fifteenth century there was little to suggest a coming intellectual revival; the German nobles of that time, Aeneas Sylvius declared, cared more for horses than for poets, while, for the rest, what slight interest there was in the things of the mind was confined to theology and scholastic philosophy. But, not long after this, wandering students began to tramp across the Alps in quest of light and guidance. Begging their way from town to town, living from hand to mouth, encountering all the temptations of vagabondage, these young seekers after knowledge were often ruined physically and morally by the conditions of their quest. Yet the strong men succeeded where the weak failed; and the strong men, no less than the weak, turned to Italy, for it was in Italy alone that they could find what they sought.

Chief among the Teutonic pioneers of the new

learning was Roelof Huysmann (1443-85), whom we know better under his Latin name, Agricola. A student first of theology and then of law, Agricola abandoned both for classical studies, and during a seven years' sojourn in Italy gave himself up entirely to Latin and Greek. He was then appointed professor at Heidelberg, where his lectures did much to create an interest in classic literature among younger men. His premature death, which occurred immediately upon his return from a second visit to Italy, was a serious loss to German enlightenment. The part which he played in breaking down theological antagonism to secular learning entitles him to kindly recollection. "He was the first," Erasmus declared, "to bring to us out of Italy a breath of higher culture."

A far larger place in the history of German humanism, however, is filled by Johann Reuchlin (1455-1532), who, after getting the rudiments of Greek at Paris and Basel, went to Rome, where he attended Argyropoulos's lectures on Thucydides. His mastery of the language was soon such as to astonish even his teacher. "Lo!" exclaimed Argyropoulos with a sigh, "through this exile of ours Greece has flown over the Alps!" In later life his erudition compelled the praise of Erasmus, who wrote of him to Leo X. as a man "almost equally skilled in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and . . . in every sort of learning." He edited Greek texts, published a Greek grammar, and by every means in his power laboured to promote the cause of Hellenism. But his principal interest was in Hebrew, and, as it happened, it was through his work in this field that he exercised the greatest influence on the fortunes of German humanism. In 1510 a renegade Jew named Pfeffercorn, either on his own initiative or as the tool of the Dominicans of Cologne, appealed to

the Emperor Maximilian to order the immediate burning or confiscation of all Jewish books except the Bible, and especially the Rabbinical writings. Reuchlin was one of the prominent scholars consulted on the subject. He alone stood firm in maintaining that, except where specifically opposed to Christian truth, such books should be preserved; and he further advocated the establishment of chairs of Hebrew in German universities. These opinions embroiled him with the Dominicans, with Hoogstraten, the papal inquisitor at Cologne, and generally with obscurantists throughout the country. The battle raged fiercely; Reuchlin was cited for heresy before the ecclesiastical court at Mainz; on his acquittal, the case was carried by the inquisitor to Rome, where the judgment was reversed, though no practical results followed. The chief point in the story for us, however, is that while antagonism to Reuchlin drew together all the foes of enlightenment and tolerance, all the leaders of German thought hastened to his support. A great impulse was thus given to the cause of the humanists, and, what is particularly important, their attention was turned decisively towards Biblical criticism. The pungent "Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum" ("Epistles of Obscure Men")—the work of some half-dozen writers of whom the most conspicuous were Crotus Rubeanus and Ulrich von Hutten—clearly show the direction which German interest was taking. Written against the opponents of Reuchlin, supposedly by some of these opponents themselves (and the joke was underscored by the fact that there were actually members of the "stupid party" who took the thing seriously), these epistles contain, along with much merciless satire upon their bigotry and bad Latin, a vigorous attack upon the doctrines and lives of the monks; and they are for this reason reckoned among the forces behind the Reforma-

tion. Here we touch already upon the most striking point of difference between humanism in Italy and humanism in Germany. In Italy revived classicism led ultimately to narrow devotion to form and style, while it was accompanied by the spread of a flippant spirit and by a widespread indifference, sometimes an avowed hostility, to Christianity. In Germany, too, there was plenty of indifference and hostility among the humanists. The rationalistic views of his Italian friends are clearly reflected in Conrad Mudt's conception of the Bible as a collection of fables designed to inculcate moral truth, while Peter Luders outrivalled in cynicism the most cynical members of the papal court when, accused of disbelief in the Trinity, he relied that he would willingly admit four persons in the Godhead if it were necessary for the sake of peace and quiet. But the characteristic tone of German humanism was neither flippant nor sceptical; on the contrary, it was serious and religious. The great feature of the German revival was the intimate connection between humanism and theology, between classical learning and the spirit of reform. This is shown again in the typical case of Philip Schwarzerd (1497-1560), whom we know by the Grecised form of his name, Melanchthon. A fine scholar, the author of a Greek grammar, the editor of several volumes of the classics, and in early life a teacher of Greek at Wittenberg, where his lectures were sometimes attended by 2,000 students of many nations, Melanchthon afterwards carried his learning into religion, and became famous as a fellow-worker with Luther in the theological field. The practical and constructive character of German humanism is further proved by the fact that even when its energies did not go into theology, they were largely absorbed by educational and social interests. Men like Jakob Wimpheling

(1450-1525), "the schoolmaster of Germany," who attacked with equal vehemence the immorality of the Curia and those paganising scholars who were seducing young Germany from Christian orthodoxy, and Alexander Hegius (1433-98), long head of the establishment of the Brethren of the Common Life at Deventer, mark the opening of a new educational era in Germany. The impetuous Ulrich von Hutten (1488-1523), though fired with zeal for learning and poetry—he was himself crowned laureate poet of Germany in 1517—afterwards threw himself into the Lutheran cause, his main interest being, however, not in its doctrines, but in its social and economic bearings.

These things considered, it is not surprising that the revival of learning in Germany was generally unproductive in the artistic and literary fields. Nor is it astonishing that its history was so brief. It ran through all its phases in little more than half a century, and may be said to have closed when Luther turned the thoughts of Young Germany into the great conflict with Rome.

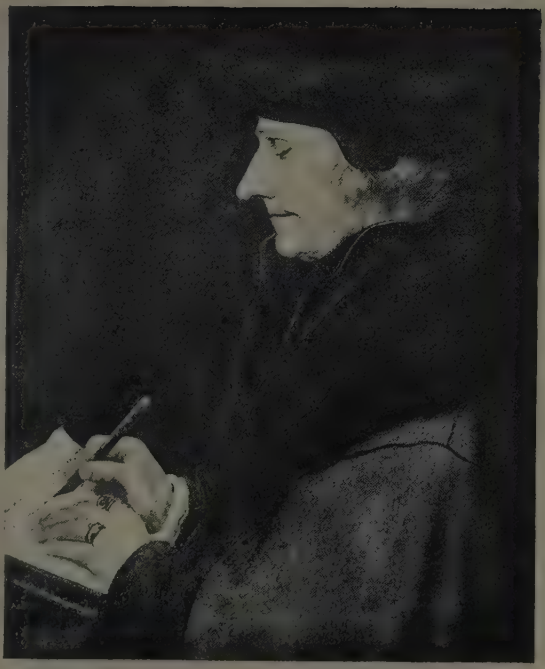
IV.—THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN FRANCE

Though signs had not been wanting earlier than this of an intellectual awakening in France, 1494 may be taken as the date of the real beginning of the Renaissance in that country. In that year Charles VIII. invaded Naples. This led to what Michelet calls the French "discovery of Italy." The entanglements of diplomacy and the blunders of political ambition had this result, that intellectual intercourse between the two nations was now opened up. Thus Italian humanism began to quicken and fertilise French genius. The internal peace and material prosperity which France

enjoyed under Charles's successors, Louis XII. (1498-1515) and Francis I. (1515-47), greatly favoured the development of learning and the arts.

Already about the middle of the fifteenth century the first suggestions of the Greek revival may be detected. In 1458 Gregorio Tifernas, who had studied under Chrysoloras, arrived in Paris, and, with the permission of the rector, taught for a time in the University. A little later came Hermonymus of Sparta, who was, indeed, far more skilled as a copyist than as a teacher, but who yet, incompetent as he was, did something to keep Hellenic enthusiasm alive. An interesting point about his prelections is that Reuchlin was one of those who attended them. Nothing of importance, however, was accomplished till the appearance, in 1495, of the Byzantine Janus Lascaris, who, on the death of his patron, Lorenzo de' Medici, settled in Paris, and taught here till 1503. During the preceding half-century the new learning had made slow headway against the prejudices and apathy of the University authorities, who, in their arrangement of the curriculum, were careful to assign only the drowsy after-dinner hours to the Greek classics, keeping the morning for such really serious subjects as logic and theology. Lascaris helped to break down this long-standing antagonism. Five years after his departure his work was taken up by the young Italian, Girolamo Aleandro (Hieronymus Aleander), later prominent as the bitter opponent of Luther at Wurms and as the persecutor of the reformers in the Netherlands. Bearing an introduction from Erasmus, he came to Paris at the age of twenty-eight, and for eight years lectured there, and in other French cities, on Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Meanwhile, native French humanists were coming to the front: the celebrated Guillaume Budé

(Budæus), perhaps the most profound Greek scholar of his day in Europe, at whose instigation Francis I., in the interests of the new learning, founded the Royal Corporation, which afterwards became the Collège de France; Étienne Dolet (1509-40), who returned from a six years' sojourn in Italy an enthusiast in classical literature, lectured at Toulouse, set up a printing press at Lyons, and was finally burned to death at Paris on a charge of heresy; Joseph Scaliger the Younger, whose enormous erudition still fills us with amazement. Yet perhaps the highest place in the history of the French classical revival is occupied by one who was not a Frenchman—I mean that wonderful wandering genius of humanism who belonged to no one country, but in the spirit of cosmopolitanism carried the light of learning and criticism from land to land. Desiderius Erasmus (the former name is the Latin, the latter the Greek, rendering of his patronymic Gerhardt) was born in Rotterdam about 1467. He received his early education at Deventer, where Agricola prophesied his future greatness. Hampered almost from the outset by poor health, he yet devoted himself with unremitting industry to classical studies. The range and the accuracy of his learning, together with his breadth of mind and the sanity of his criticism, gave him an almost unique place among the European scholars of his day; we scarcely exaggerate his position when we speak of him as the typical humanist of the entire northern revival. At the same time his restless disposition marked him out as the great apostle of culture. We find him at Oxford in 1498; in Paris from 1500 to 1505; from 1506 to 1509 in Italy—now in Bologna, now in Venice with Aldo, now in Padua, Siena, Rome; from 1510 to 1513 in Cambridge as professor of divinity; in 1514 at Basel, where (though with many minor interruptions) he



Erasmus

passed the remaining years of his life in incessant literary activity, and where he died in 1536. He was thus brought into personal contact with the followers of humanism in many of its chief centres, and wherever he went he left the impress of his presence. Yet, great as was the direct influence which he thus gave to European learning, the influence which he exerted by the pen, as the foremost man of letters of his age, was even more important. A voluminous writer on many lines, he filled everything he touched with the spirit of the new era. Of his connection with the Reformation, I shall speak in the next chapter. For the moment we have only to think of him as the most powerful single influence in the Renaissance north of the Alps. He has been mentioned before; he will be mentioned again; and, as he hardly belonged to France more than to Germany or to England, some apology may be necessary for the introduction of our principal reference to him here. Yet his early residence in Paris and his frequent visits there made his connection with the French revival very close, and as a matter of convenience, therefore, he may fittingly be considered in relation with it.

V.—THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN ENGLAND

In England the faint beginnings of the revival of learning may be traced back as far as Chaucer, in whose later writings we already perceive the influence of humanism. Personal contact with Italy during two public missions there, on the first of which he may possibly have met both Petrarch and Boccaccio, had manifestly much to do with this. His direct indebtedness to both these writers is very obvious, but his kinship with them in spirit is a matter of far greater import.

For he, too, is the exponent of a view of life which is at once anti-sacerdotal and anti-ascetic; with him, too, literature disengages itself from mediæval theology and metaphysics, and associates itself with the varied interests of the secular world.

As Wyclif is called the morning star of the English Reformation, so Chaucer may fairly be called the morning star of the English Renaissance. But he came before the times were ripe, and the humanistic movement advanced but little in the century following his death. Conditions were for the time unfavourable to its progress. The fifteenth century was an age of political and social upheaval, of "noises and hoarse disputes." The country was rent by the protracted struggles between the houses of York and Lancaster. In these struggles many of the great noble families were practically wiped out, feudalism dying by its own hand. This was to be of advantage later in helping to break up the mediæval foundations of society, but for the moment it destroyed that patronage upon which the bookman largely depended. Within the Church the Lollard controversy raged fiercely, and the spirit of persecution awoke in the land. This was itself fatal to intellectual expansion. Meanwhile, such little mental activity as there was had, of course, to be sought mainly in the Universities, but these had sunk into a state of almost incredible apathy. Absorbed in their dreary logic-chopping and their endless scholastic disputations, teachers and students alike were practically indifferent to the claims of liberal culture.

Yet there were bright spots amid the prevailing gloom. The spirit of humanism was not entirely submerged by the tides of turbulence and ignorance. One name in particular stands out in the annals of the first half of the fifteenth century: that of Humphrey, Duke

of Gloucester, brother of Henry V., and popularly called (for no very obvious reason) "the good Duke Humphrey." A man of unbridled passions, and, in public life, guilty of folly and cruelty, he was none the less intellectually far in advance of his time. A patron of learning in the Italian sense, he not only gathered English scholars about him, but also induced some of the younger Italians to visit him and to make translations for him from the classics. He also corresponded with some of the more famous of the Italian scholars, among whom he enjoyed a high reputation, as is attested by the fact that Aretino and Decembrio dedicated to him their versions, the one of Aristotle's "Poetics," the other of Plato's "Republic." He was himself an ardent lover of books, a collection of which, numbering, it is said, 135, he presented to the University of Oxford. In other ways he did his best to revive there an interest in classical learning, and it is probably owing in large measure to the new taste he thus helped to introduce that about the middle of the century we find young Oxford men already making pilgrimages to Italy for the express purpose of studying in the Universities or in Guarino Veronese's School—the most famous school of that age. The most important of these early pilgrims to the Mecca of English humanism was William Tilley, better known (from the name of the Kentish village in which he was born) as Selling (died 1495). An Oxonian by training and a member of the Benedictine Order, he went to Italy with his friend, William Hadley, in 1464. Together they studied in Padua and Bologna, heard the lectures of the great Politian, and also met Chalcondylas. Selling returned to England full of zeal for the new learning. On his appointment as prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, he made that monastery a home of Hellenic studies;

while as master of the affiliated school he had a further opportunity of spreading classic tastes. The record of what Oxford and her sons were thus doing shows that even during the fifteenth century the new spirit was at work, while about the middle of the century Cambridge also exhibited signs of intellectual life. It was, however, not until that century approached its close that England began to share definitely in the great movement of the European Renaissance. Many factors now co-operated to bring about the conditions necessary to enable the sixteenth century to fulfil the promises of the fourteenth. Internal peace and order were restored; the power of feudalism was broken; commerce and industry were developing rapidly; wealth spread; and this brought increase of leisure and that economising of energy which enabled men to devote more and more of their time to intellectual pursuits.

In the next phase of English humanism Oxford again takes the lead, and it is with three Oxford friends —Linacre, Grocyn, and Latimer—that classical scholarship in England really begins.

Thomas Linacre (*cir.* 1460-1524) was a pupil of Selling at Canterbury, whence he went to Oxford, where it is supposed that he may have continued his Greek studies under a wandering Italian scholar named Cornelio Vitelli, who seems to have been lecturing there on Greek subjects as early as 1475. In 1486 he accompanied Selling on an embassy from Henry VII. to the Pope, and while in Italy he attended the lectures of Politian and also enjoyed the privilege of sharing the private lessons given by that great scholar to the sons of Lorenzo de' Medici. He also visited various centres of learning, and in Venice became a member of Aldo's Academy. He took his degree in medicine at Padua, and on his return to England began to

practise as a physician. For a time he lectured on Greek at Oxford, and throughout his life he showed the wide interests and the versatility which marked so many men of the Renaissance. But his chief concern was with science, in the service of which he mainly employed his classical attainments; as, notably, in his translation of Galen, which he dedicated to Leo X. in memory, as he said, of the common studies of their youth. He was long Court physician, and founded the London College of Physicians, but late in life he entered the Church.

William Grocyn (*cir.* 1446-1519), who is also said to have been a pupil of Vitelli at Oxford, resigned his readership in Divinity in 1488 and went to Florence, where he studied under Politian and Chalcondylas. He remained in Italy two years, and, like Linacre, became a friend of Aldo. Then, having taught Greek at Oxford for a season, he became Master of All Hallows College, near Maidstone. He and Linacre in their Oxford lectures reckoned among their pupils Erasmus, More, and Colet. Never inclined to overstate his obligations to others, Erasmus none the less acknowledged the immense profit he had derived from Grocyn's teaching. The same great scholar's statement that in England during his first visit (1498-1500) he found such "profound" and "exact" learning that he now felt "no great longing for Italy except for what is to be seen there," is proof of the progress which England had made in classical studies.

Though little otherwise is known of him, William Latimer (whose baptismal name is also given as Thomas) deserves mention because he was a close friend of Linacre and Grocyn, and helped them to found Greek scholarship in England. Like them he studied in Italy; with them he taught at Oxford. His reputation for

scholarship stood high, but he produced very little, for which reason Erasmus compared him with a miser hoarding his gold.

Among the most famous of the pupils of Linacre and Grocyn, John Colet (1467?-1515) possesses a broader interest than either of them in the general history of his time. He is specially important as the first great connecting link in England between the Renaissance and the Reformation—between the spirit of humanism and the religious revival. After seven years at Oxford he started for the Continent to pursue his studies for the Church, his head already filled with Plato, Plotinus, and St. Paul. He reached Italy in 1493; but though he mingled freely with the brilliant circle of Lorenzo the Magnificent, his strongly puritan nature recoiled shocked from the corruption which he found everywhere prevalent. It was more to his purpose then that he also became acquainted with the ideas of Savonarola. He returned home little interested in the subjects with which the Italian humanists were most occupied—classical antiquity, the beauties of pagan literature, the questions of form and style—but passionately convinced that the new learning might be put to service in the regeneration of religion. In 1497 he began to give free lectures at Oxford on St. Paul's epistles, abandoning the allegorical interpretations of mediæval theology, and substituting a broad historical mode of treatment. Grocyn had already led the way in this, but Colet turned the new method to even better account, continuing the same line of work later when, as Dean of St. Paul's, he preached on Matthew's Gospel, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. It was at Oxford that Erasmus met him; a warm friendship at once sprang up between the two men, and Colet greatly influenced Erasmus on the subject of scriptural interpretation. He further gave an

immense stimulus to classical scholarship when, with the money inherited from his father, he founded St. Paul's Grammar School—the first school in England expressly devoted to the new learning. The statutes of the institution prescribed that the master should be "learned in good and clean Latin, and also in Greek, if such may be gotten." It is specially noteworthy that when, in 1518, foreseeing that his end was fast approaching, Colet wished to make arrangements for the future of his establishment, he should have entrusted the Mercers' Company with its management; for this is the first example of the secular management of any educational institution in England, and a sign of the invasion of education by the lay spirit. The first head master, William Lily, the grammarian, is also a figure of some interest. The Latin grammar prepared by him, with the help of Colet and Erasmus, was published in 1518, and was long the standard work in all English schools. It was in its pages that young William Shakespeare conned the Latin accidence at Stratford Grammar School, and the well-known scene of catechising in the "Merry Wives" (IV. i.) is based upon it.

The time was now ripe for the educational revival which Colet thus began. Other schools of a humanistic character soon followed, such as Christ's Hospital, the Merchant Taylors' School, and the Charterhouse. Outside London there was similar activity. In all 63 new schools were founded in the reign of Henry VIII., 50 in that of Edward VI., 19 in that of Mary, 138 in that of Elizabeth, while older schools were everywhere remodelled upon the new lines. These establishments secured the progress of classical studies for the coming generation, and did much to extend humanism beyond the limits of the purely academic caste.

Here the work of Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) also counted, though in a somewhat different way. A pupil at Oxford of Linacre and Grocyn, with both of whom he remained on terms of intimate friendship, and a great admirer of the Florentine Platonist, Pico della Mirandola, whose life he wrote, he, as a public man and a courtier, carried humanism into circles which had not hitherto been stirred by it. Of his great book, the "Utopia," in which so much of the eager and speculative spirit of the age is expressed, I have already spoken. One piece of practical work accomplished by him for the cause of culture must not here be forgotten. The new learning encountered vigorous opposition at Oxford from obscurantist teachers, who scented irreligion in it and had the prescience to foresee that it would, in the long run, prove destructive of the old scholasticism to which they were wedded. The contest turned in particular on the question of Greek, which was regarded by conservatives as peculiarly fatal to piety. "Beware of the Greeks lest you be made a heretic," was a phrase of the time; and even at Court there were not wanting preachers bold enough to denounce Greek in their sermons. The conflict between the two parties at Oxford—the "Greeks" and the "Trojans," as they came to be called—had begun with Grocyn's lectures at Exeter College; it reached its height in the early years of Henry VIII.'s reign, when parties of Trojans, under leaders whom they nicknamed Priam and Hector, followed the Greeks about the streets and openly insulted them. More exerted his influence on the Greek side, wrote personally on the subject to the University authorities, and finally enlisted the support of the King. It was largely through his efforts that a peremptory royal decree, in 1519, scattered the Trojans and secured the triumph of the Greeks. Three

years before this the first endowed lectureship in Greek had been instituted by Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester, as part of the new foundation of Corpus Christi.

Thus far we have been mainly concerned with Oxford, or the widely ramifying influence of Oxford. But while Oxford was the first real centre of English Hellenism, her younger sister University presently followed her lead. The new learning reached Cambridge early in the sixteenth century, when Erasmus made the rather dangerous experiment of starting a class in Greek. He had few pupils, and the seniors regarded his innovation with suspicion; but his labours were continued more successfully by Richard Croke, who had been in Italy on matters connected with Henry VIII.'s divorce, and had gained considerable reputation by his lectures at Cologne, Louvain, and Leipzig. Appointed orator to the University, he was daring enough in his inaugural addresses to emphasise the value of the new learning in the interpretation of Scripture. The influence of John Fisher (1469-1535), Bishop of Rochester, was a chief factor in the final establishment of Greek at Cambridge. Fisher belonged in large measure to the past, and was in general opposed to the spirit of change; yet he was a strong advocate of Greek as part of the curriculum. When, at forty-six, he had himself taken up that language, he had been told by Latimer that he would make but little headway unless he could get a teacher from Italy. His effort to remove the implied reproach was so successful that before long we find Erasmus writing warmly of the way in which the new learning was fast displacing those scholastic studies which until quite recently had seemed permanently entrenched in the Cambridge classrooms. But a chair of Greek was not founded at Cambridge till 1540, with John Cheke as the first incumbent.

After that, progress was so rapid that Cambridge soon caught up with Oxford. Among the best known of classical teachers there was a man whose name will come up again more than once—Roger Ascham, who in early life was reader in Greek at St. John's.

The spirit of the new learning, thus increasingly powerful in the Universities and the schools, meanwhile began to pervade the Court and the nobility. In the footsteps of the scholars who had gone to Italy as the fountain-head of culture, there soon followed a very different race of pilgrims—the wealthy pleasure-seekers who thought of it only as the land of adventure and amusement. Before the middle of the sixteenth century Italy in its decline had ceased to attract the serious student; but the potency of her appeal to the dilettante traveller was year by year growing stronger. Numbers of Englishmen of the idle sort might now be found in every important Italian city. Even Erasmus had perceived the evil consequences which were likely to ensue in unripe minds from contact with the shameless wickedness of a decadent civilisation; and Ascham's vigorous denunciations of Italy's "Circean charms" were taken up and echoed by satirists, preachers, and pamphleteers, especially by those tinctured with the sentiments of the growing puritan school. "I was once in Italy myself," wrote Ascham, "but I thank God my abode there was but nine days; and yet I saw in that little time, in one city, more liberty to sin than ever I heard tell of in our noble city of London in nine years." "Our countrymen," wrote Jerome Turber in 1575, "usually bring with them three things out of Italy: a naughty conscience, an empty purse, and a weak stomach." It is certain that the "apish English nation"* was a very apt pupil in the great school of southern affectations and profligacy,

* Shakespeare's "Richard II." II. i. 20.

and that there was the sting of truth in the current saying that the Italianate Englishman was the devil incarnate.

Yet, notwithstanding the deplorable immediate results of the fashionable English mania for everything Italian, even Italian vice, the dark picture painted by contemporary moralists had fortunately a bright side. For another channel was thus opened up through which the spirit of humanism found its way into English society. Under its influence the old chivalrous type of manhood began to disappear, and a broader and richer conception of the "gentleman" arose to take its place—a conception which embraced interests and accomplishments altogether out of harmony with the prevailing sentiments of feudal times. In Castiglione's "Cortigiano," or "Courtier," which was translated into English in 1586, and instantly became popular as the accepted handbook of manners, it is expressly argued, as against the mediæval superstition that a taste for knowledge was vulgar and fitting only for a "clerk," that learning is "a true and powerful ornament" in one who would be a perfect gentleman. The product of this blending of the humanistic spirit with the old ideas of chivalry had already been shown in the typical gentleman of his age, Sir Philip Sidney. The Court of Henry VIII. was thoroughly indoctrinated with these novel notions. The King himself loved theology and scholastic disquisition, and to this extent, as well as in his devotion to tournaments and the chase, he belonged to the outgoing order. But he had at the same time strong leanings towards humanism; he was fond of foreigners, especially Italians, and those whom he gathered about him gave added impulse to the Italian spirit and the classical influences which it brought with it. A real love of learning began to manifest itself

among the upper ranks of English society. We see this in such representative men as Wyatt and Surrey. Even more clearly we see it in such feminine products of Renaissance educational ideals as Lady Jane Grey and the Princess Elizabeth. The former read Latin, French, Italian, Greek, and Hebrew. Ascham tells us how one day in 1550, when she was only fifteen, he found her poring over Plato in the original, while the rest of her family were out hunting. The same writer is also our chief authority regarding the extraordinary accomplishments of Princess Elizabeth. "I was her preceptor in Latin and Greek for two years. She was but sixteen when she could speak French and Italian with as much fluence and propriety as English. She speaks Latin readily, justly, and even critically. She has often conversed with me in Greek, and with tolerable facility." This love of learning Elizabeth carried with her into womanhood; and, when she became queen, it did much to give its characteristic tone to her Court.

Then, little by little, from the Universities and the aristocracy the new learning and the spirit of culture spread among the English people. The great schools, of course, helped much to stimulate intellectual interests; but the work of popularisation was furthered even more effectively by a race of translators who now arose and opened the treasures of Greek, Latin, and Italian literatures to those for whom the originals were sealed books. The period of the Renaissance was an age of translation. Vergil, Ovid, Cicero, Demosthenes, and Plutarch, for example, were all "Englished" before 1579; the first part of Chapman's Homer came in 1598; numerous versions of the separate plays of Seneca were issued between 1559 and 1566, and a complete edition in 1581; in 1591 and 1600 respectively, "Orlando Furioso" and "Jerusalem Delivered" appeared in

English dress; while throughout the later sixteenth century dozens of Italian story books were translated or adapted for the home market—the story books which provided raw material for so many of the Elizabethan dramatists, including Shakespeare. The importance of all these translations in carrying the new spirit abroad beyond the field of the scholar and the Court cannot well be overstated. It is shown, for instance, by the case of Shakespeare. It is safe to say that some three-fourths of Shakespeare's knowledge of classical mythology were derived from Arthur Golding's version of the "Metamorphoses," seven editions of which were published between 1565 and 1597, while his indebtedness to North's Plutarch is familiar to every reader. We are thus brought down to the point at which the history of the revival of letters in England merges in the general history of English Renaissance literature.

VI.—GENERAL RESULTS OF THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING

With this brief historical sketch before us, we must now try to sum up the general results of the revival of learning.

Its most important influence is to be sought in what it effected as a chief agent in the transformation of the whole intellectual and moral spirit of the age. Emphasis must here be thrown upon a point made in the opening section of this chapter—that the rediscovery of pagan literature meant that the slumbering mind of antiquity was awakened and made a living power in the modern world. The single word humanism is in itself enough to indicate the significance of this. In classical literature a generation of men who were still haunted by the cramping traditions of mediævalism read the watchword of emancipation. They found in

it an emphatic assertion of the long-neglected claims of nature and the dignity and value of the earthly life. The world into which it introduced them was a larger and more varied world than they had hitherto known. It suggested possibilities of experience of which they had never dreamed. They breathed in it an atmosphere charged with new and intoxicating emotions. The type of character which it presented to them was very different from the pinched and starved humanity which ecclesiastical otherworldliness and the superstition of asceticism had long held up as the highest standard of spiritual attainment. To men who had come into contact with the great literary masterpieces of Greece and Rome, things about them and their own lives could never be the same again. Out of the long-forgotten pagan past a generous and inspiring influence swept in among the dry conventions and the blighting formulas of their theology. Their thoughts were liberalised, their feelings quickened and expanded. Human nature seemed to renew its dignity. The world was filled with beauty and fresh meaning.

Humanism was thus a powerful instrument in the development of both the individualism and the secularism which I have already designated as among the most prominent features of the Renaissance. It was hostile to the entire mediæval conception of life, and of man's place, powers, and destiny. It shifted the ethical accent from submission and self-repression to liberty and self-realisation. It stimulated the lay spirit into revolt against the spirit of theology. Moreover, the critical temper which was a product of classical studies was a deadly foe to the monstrous pretensions of the Church and to that dictatorship which for centuries had paralysed the European mind. The revival of learning, therefore, was not the least among the various

forces which co-operated in the movement for the freedom of thought.

It is sufficient for the moment to mark these larger bearings of the rebirth of pagan antiquity in respect of its effect upon the growth of personality and of the critical spirit. To both these matters we shall have to return when we reach the literary aspects of the period of the Renaissance. More generally, the significance of the classical revival as the principal motive power in the genesis of modern European literatures will then also come before us for discussion.

Keeping still to the broader lines of our subject, we have yet to consider the influence of neo-classicism on another side.

The marked difference in spirit between the Renaissance in Italy and the Renaissance north of the Alps has already been suggested. In Italy the great movement of the fifteenth century was scholarly and æsthetic, and it spent itself in erudition and artistic effort. In Germany the great movement of the sixteenth century was practical and religious, and it spent itself in efforts for moral and social reform. In France to some extent, in England very notably, neo-classicism was tempered and controlled by the forces of the religious revival, and the two movements ran together. But the contrast is most pronounced between Italy and Germany.

Of the fearful depravity of the later Italian Renaissance I have already spoken, and I shall have to refer to it again. It is not, I think, extravagant to say that for any parallel we have to go back to the annals of the decadent Roman Empire. Private profligacy and political debasement united to disgrace the age. The Papal Court was rotten at the core; secular rulers openly flouted the plainest considerations of morality.

Nor is it chiefly of the colossal and almost bizarre wickedness of such monsters as Malatesta, Sixtus IV., Alexander VI., and Cesare Borgia that we have to think. The worst feature of the time was the general tone of laxity and flippancy throughout society, that widespread demoralisation which was so subtle in its influence that even decent people grew tolerant of evil, and few apparently thought or cared much for the corruption at their doors. Some of the most eminent humanists were notorious ill-livers, like the brilliant Politian, who was, for a while at least, addicted to the lowest forms of vice. Lovers of learning and art indulged in brutal crimes; enjoyment of beauty went along with the coarsest sensuality; vulgar intrigues and broils occurred amid surroundings of the most exquisite refinement. This is the paradox of the Italian Renaissance which Browning has illustrated so powerfully in "The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's," and which justifies the most vehement of Ruskin's denunciations.

Now a most important question arises here—What is the explanation of this moral decadence? And I put it at this point because it is necessary to mark the real relations between humanism and the current depravity. It is too often assumed that such relations were relations of cause and effect; that the enthusiasm for everything Greek and Roman which followed the classic revival bred a spirit of neo-paganism, which was alone responsible in its turn for the demoralisation of Italian life. This, however, is a very narrow and imperfect view. Examination shows that there was at no time any necessary connection between the most ardent devotion to classical pursuits and immorality, or even scepticism. Petrarch was not a neo-pagan, but an orthodox churchman and a man of intensely devout nature; Guarino

da Verona and Vetterino da Feltre combined Christianity with their classicism; and if men like Ficino and Pico della Mirandola were lax in doctrine, they found in Plato, Socrates, and Plutarch—as well they might—moral inspiration and support. The real causes behind Italian corruption were the social disorganisation which followed perpetual internecine wars, the unscrupulous spirit of policy bred of this and of the fierce struggle for existence, the chaos which inevitably ensued on the too rapid collapse of the old order of ideas, and the iniquitous scandals which defamed the Church and many of its greatest official representatives. But though classical enthusiasm cannot be charged with the heavy responsibility of the paganism which ran riot in contemporary Italy, neither on the other hand can it be entirely relieved of it. In the peculiar Italian temperament the all-absorbing love of culture and beauty certainly did help to create moral insensibility, while the classical reaction against the asceticism and dogmatism of theology accelerated the tendency towards libertine excess in conduct and thought. Justly anxious to assert the rights of human nature, with all its powers and passions, against the repressive creeds of the past, the lover of pagan literature was apt at times to proclaim his gospel of emancipation a trifle too stridently; and it will not be denied that there was much in that pagan literature to give a glamour to indulgence. The impulse behind any movement, it may be argued, must in some measure be held accountable for all its consequences; the classic impulse, therefore, not only for the individualism and the secularism of Renaissance Italy, but also for the unabashed egotism to which the individualism led, and that lust for merely material satisfactions which grew out of the secularism. This view may, indeed, be contested. But in any event, if humanism

did little in a positive way to cause or increase the moral rot of Italian society, it is certain that it did nothing to stop that rot when once it had set in. Italian humanism was not necessarily immoral, but it was commonly indifferent, and meanwhile no other force came into operation to prevent the moral disintegration which at least it was powerless to check.

The contrast between Italy and the northern countries is now apparent. Beyond the Alps the Renaissance was saved from the worst excesses of the southern revival, and, though the explanation of this is in part, of course, to be sought in general conditions, stress must still be laid on the fact that in Germany, France, and England the humanistic movement was accompanied by the awakening of the moral nature. We must not, indeed, press the contrast in question too far. The social causes behind the demoralisation of Italy were to some extent at work elsewhere, and results followed similar in kind, though happily differing in degree. Even among the Reformers in Germany and the Huguenots in France there was plenty of personal license, while the neo-paganism of the England of the sixteenth century, with its fierce passions, its feverish temper, and its lust of life, is familiar to all of us in the mirror of the drama if not in the writings of the moralists. Yet if the difference to be recognised be one only of degree, in this matter difference of degree is of the utmost importance. Wherever the energies of the Reformation were allowed free play, they brought with them a strong impulse to social and moral regeneration; the vigorous protests of Calvinism and Puritanism against the prevailing profligacy may in particular be cited in illustration. Here the peculiar situation of England calls for special remark. In Germany humanism was absorbed by the Reformation.

In France the Reformation was too soon stamped out. In England the Reformation was consummated just when humanism began to penetrate society, and thereafter, though with some temporary interruption and no little friction, the two movements went on side by side. In England, therefore, a far closer connection existed between the two great forces of the Renaissance —the intellectual and the spiritual—than was possible elsewhere. It is this combination of influences which goes far to explain both the greatness and the contradictions of Elizabethan life and of the literature to which it gave birth.

CHAPTER IV

The Renaissance in Religion—The Reformation

I.—PRELIMINARIES OF THE REFORMATION

THOUGH conflict early broke out between them, it is a mistake to regard the Reformation as a reaction against the Renaissance. Born of the same revulsion against the dogmatism and sterility of the past, and inspired by the same craving for emancipation and individuality, it is rather to be interpreted as the spiritual and moral side of the great comprehensive movement the intellectual aspect of which is principally connected with the revival of classical antiquity. The close association of the Reformation and humanism will become apparent as we proceed. But before we enter into details we must briefly consider our subject in some of its broader relationships.

The great revolt of the first half of the sixteenth century had long been foreshadowed in growing hostility to the Roman Church on political and national no less than on moral grounds. Hildebrand's conception of Christendom as a single state under the rule of the Roman Pontiff as suzerain or sovereign-in-chief was too imposing to be abandoned by his successors, and the lofty pretensions which he had formulated were again and again set forth by them in the plainest possible terms. The supremacy claimed by the papacy was, therefore, temporal as well as spiritual. The Pope held the keys of earth and heaven. He assumed the

right to depose kings, assign their territories, exonerate their subjects from allegiance to them. Alexander VI. acted as lord of the universe, with full power to grant and to withhold, when in his bull, "Inter Caelia Divinae," he presented the New World to Ferdinand and Isabella.

It is astonishing that these pretensions should thus have been maintained and repeated even after the Babylonish Captivity (1345-76) and the great Western Schism (1378-1417). But the papacy did not emerge from that trying period with prestige unimpaired. The amazing spectacle of two rival infallible heads of a united Christendom anathematising and excommunicating each other was calculated to shake the loyalty even of those who believed most firmly in the Pope as God's vicar on earth; and it was not easy to revive that loyalty even after the "peace of the Church" had been restored. Already the development of the theory of the Holy Roman Empire, to balance that of the Holy Catholic Church, had forced a controversy concerning papal claims on the temporal side; and the bitter struggle between the imperial party and the papal party was, under one of its aspects, a clear manifestation of the activity of the rising secular spirit. That the papal party deeply resented the doctrines of the party of the empire shows how tenaciously they held to the Pope's supposed temporal prerogatives. Dante's argument in "De Monarchia" that the imperial authority is not delegated by the Church, but descends directly from God, the source of all authority, and that the empire was, therefore, supreme within the secular sphere, was so distasteful to supporters of the Hildebrandine theory that in 1326 the book was burned as heretical by the legate of Pope John XXII., and in the sixteenth century was placed on the Index. To a large extent, of course,

the struggle of Emperor and Pope was merely a practical trial of strength. But the doctrine of the Pope's temporal supremacy was also challenged. In his treatise on the Donation of Constantine (1440), undertaken at the request of Alfonso of Naples, the great humanist, Lorenzo Valla, proved that the alleged donation was a forgery, and thus destroyed one of the foundation-stones of the papal claims.

Meanwhile, as one result of the Great Schism, the idea of a General Council, which had long lain dormant, was revived, and with the conflict between the Pope and the councils, the story of the former's effort to maintain his position passes into another phase, the point now at issue being whether the Pope was superior to the Church in Council or the Church in Council to the Pope. During the contest, which was roughly a contest between the autocratic and the democratic views of ecclesiastical government, France and Germany took occasion to advance distinct claims for the independence of their national churches. Both at Constance and at Basel attempts were made to check papal absolutism, and in the Pragmatic Sanction of 1438 conciliar supremacy was formally asserted. But the great councils, instead of voicing the unanimous opinion of the Church, expressed little more than the clashing interests of the nations represented in them; their influence, therefore, was very slight, and their practical failure left the Popes in possession of the field.

It is more important, however, to notice that with the growth of the territorial ambitions of the papacy on the one side, and with the steady consolidation of the secular powers on the other, there was a continual increase in tension between the Holy See and national rulers. The development all over Europe of the spirit

of national self-consciousness was itself a menace to the Roman doctrine of suzerainty. Controversy broke out repeatedly on many points. One constant source of irritation was the ecclesiastical contention that the clergy, as owing allegiance only to the Church, were entirely independent of the rule of the princes in whose territories they lived. Concerned with the administration of justice within their own domains, such rulers naturally rebelled against the immunities thus enjoyed by a large class of the community, who could not be reached by the arm of the secular law. This was a sufficiently serious matter, for, as the Diet of Nürnberg in 1522 emphatically asserted, it was directly responsible for all sorts of crime and was fatal to good government. The notorious greed and venality of the Church was another source of perpetual trouble. From the time of John XXII. (1316-24) onward there had been a rapid growth in the machinery of the papacy for the extortion of money in the form of tithes, annates, procurations, subsidies, dispensations for all sorts of breaches of the canonical and moral laws, fees for innumerable things done or left undone. The Papal Court became the highest court of appeal in Christendom, and had a thousand devices for sucking the blood out of the unfortunate litigants who carried their cases before it; its chancery expanded into a bloated organisation of highly paid officials, whose salaries necessitated ever-increasing demands upon the purses of the faithful. Extraordinary levies were made for special purposes. Simony went on unchecked. Rich livings in different countries were held by men who absorbed their revenues without ever going near them—were held even by children. The everlasting drain upon their resources which resulted from these abuses became a problem of vital importance to secular rulers; money which should

have been kept at home to enrich the national exchequer was perpetually flowing forth to fill the coffers of the Papal Court. The great local ecclesiastics showed themselves as extravagant and rapacious as the members of the Sacred College themselves; they lived like wealthy feudal nobles, keeping up a similar state and retinue. Even the lower clergy, too, often incurred the same reproach of worldliness; while the mendicant orders, though bound by stringent vows of poverty, had grown rich and had become a byword for the way in which their affluence was abused. Intricate financial considerations have thus to be included among the causes which led to national revolts against Rome. It is necessary to emphasise this fact for its importance in connection with the Reformation on its political side.

At the root of the great reaction, however, lay the protest of the conscience against the moral rottenness of the unreformed Church. This rottenness began at headquarters, and spread thence through the entire ecclesiastical system. In carrying out its policy of aggrandisement, the papacy showed itself brutally callous to all considerations of right or humanity. It was through the "corrupt example" of the Papal Court, as even Machiavelli declared, that Italy had lost its religion, and had lapsed into heathenism. In a piece of biting satire Boccaccio told of a visitor to Rome who left the Holy City more than ever convinced of the divine truth of Christianity: only divine truth could possibly survive the scandalous lives of its official exponents! * On his first journey to Rome, Luther, when he came in sight of the walls, threw up his hands in an ecstasy, exclaiming: "Greetings, thou Holy Rome!" He soon found Holy Rome a sink of iniquity,

* "Decamerone," I. ii.

and what he saw in it left an indelible impression on his mind. The knowledge which Hutten obtained at first hand of the Court of Julius II.—the "scourge of mankind" and a wolf rather than a shepherd—opened his eyes once and for all to the real condition of the papacy; on his second visit, in 1516, he gave his opinions in a series of epigrams sent to his friend, Crotus Rubianus, at home: "You may live by plunder, commit murders and sacrilege; break the laws as you will; your talk and actions may be shameful; you may revel in lust and deny God; but, if you bring money with you, you are a respectable man!" The almost incredible corruption of the papacy during the period immediately preceding the Reformation is familiarly illustrated by the lives and characters of some of those who occupied the Fisherman's chair: by Sextus IV., who connived in political conspiracy and assassination; by the licentious and spendthrift Innocent VIII., who got so deeply into debt that he had to pledge the papal tiara; by the monstrous Alexander VI., infamous scion of an infamous stock, for whom poison and the dagger were but commonplaces in a career of avarice and lust; by the domineering and unscrupulous Julius II., who, to carry out his schemes, did not hesitate to plunge Italy into civil war; by the worldly-minded Leo X., who, Medici enough to cherish political ambitions, and to cloak them beneath the mask of facile benevolence, yet sought at the same time to enjoy life by indulging at once his æsthetic tastes and his fondness for low, and even blasphemous, jesting. Meanwhile, little was left even of the pretence of piety. The great ecclesiastics of the Papal Court treated matters of faith with an indifference which they made no attempt to conceal. "This fable of Christ," a great dignitary of the Vatican is reported to have said, "has been a source

of great profit to us." The spiritual claims of the papacy were a current joke even among their supporters. Secular attainments rather than religious zeal were the passport to preferment. Cardinal Bembo, who advised a friend not to read St. Paul's Epistles lest their barbarous style should spoil his own, was appointed secretary to Leo X. on the strength of his Ciceronian Latinity. Clerics of high standing openly refused to use the Vulgate because of its unclassical diction. The cynical contempt of the Vatican even for the traditions of decency was even more conclusively shown in its attitude towards those whose writings reflected the foulest spirit of the times. Filelfo's satires, described by Symonds as "the most nauseous compositions that coarse spite and filthy fancy ever spawned," were read by Nicholas V., who rewarded their author with a gift of 500 ducats. The ribaldry and scurrility of Poggio received no official reproof. Aretino's unspeakable depravity escaped censure. Beccadilli's excursions into indecency were no obstacle to his advancement. That this corruption at the very centre of the Church was one cause of the frightful religious and moral decadence of Renaissance Italy has already been pointed out. In particular we must emphasise that disastrous influence which it exerted in widening the chasm between religion and life. Superstition flourished, as it often does, on the soil of unbelief. Malatesta had the sacraments administered to him when he died; Machiavelli was attended by a priest during his last hours; Caterina Sforza endowed convents and built churches in reparation to God for every act of crime; Benvenuto Cellini was at once a devout Catholic and a ruffian, a liar, a thief, and a murderer. But living faith—the faith that enters into and fashions character—had almost gone. The great desire of the papacy

on the eve of the Reformation was simply to be left alone. Its temper was that of easy-going tolerance towards all who were wise enough in their sinning not to interfere with its position or interests. This was the temper of the selfish Leo; and it greatly favoured the spread of the licensed hypocrisy which was generally fashionable. Hence those who looked to Rome for inspiration and guidance were doomed to disappointment. Elsewhere, the Church was fast turning distrust into active hostility by its defiance of its own nominal teachings. Its flaunting worldliness was an offence in the eyes of thoughtful and earnest men. The evil living of the clergy, high and low, became a text for evangelical preachers and a theme for satire in all European literatures. In the case of the mendicant orders themselves the scandal was all the more flagrant because, keeping up as they did the semblance of special sanctity, they added hypocrisy to their other sins.

The history of the Church, then, for a hundred and fifty years before the Reformation, is the history of a steady movement from bad to worse. Satirised, ridiculed, denounced, execrated, the Roman Curia held obstinately to its evil way, caring little for secular remonstrance or conciliar reproof. Then agitation apparently died down. On Leo X.'s accession there seemed less demand for reform than there had been at any time during the previous century. The Church was, in fact, fast lapsing into a dream of fancied security, when it was rudely awakened by the bursting of the great German storm.

II.—EARLY MOVEMENTS OF REFORM IN ITALY

Efforts to correct ecclesiastical abuses began almost as early as the abuses themselves, and the record of

them down to the opening of the sixteenth century provides matter for an almost continuous history.

This is as true of Italy as of other countries. Among political parties, the Ghibellines stood throughout for opposition to the Hildebrandine conception of the Church and the growth of its territorial ambitions; and here it is that the great name of Dante finds a place in the bead-roll of the reformers. Within the Church the spirit of regeneration sometimes took strange forms. This was the case in the twelfth century with the apocalyptic teachings of Joachim, abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Floris in Calabria. A disciple who collected the master's scattered treatises into a single volume, which he called "The Everlasting Gospel," declared that this was nothing less than the gospel named in Revelation xiv. 6, and that it would shortly supersede the New Testament. The basis of the theory set out in it is that of three periods of human history corresponding to the three persons of the Trinity; the rule of the Father belonged to Old Testament dispensation; that of the Son to the order initiated by the New Testament; now the "last days" were at hand, when the world was to enter upon the reign of the Holy Ghost. The tendency of this theory was at once strongly anti-sacerdotal and strongly antinomian; it was one of the influences behind the Albigensian movement; it was also largely responsible for many of the curious sects and associations which sprang up all over Europe during the thirteenth century, and of which the Brethren of the Free Spirit, the Fratecelli, the Beghards, and the Flagellants may be named as examples. Far more serious work was meanwhile undertaken by a succession of impassioned preachers in different parts of Italy: by Arnold of Brescia, in the twelfth century; by Giovanni of Vicenza, in the thirteenth; by Giacoponi

di Todi, at Pavia, in the fourteenth; by San Bernardino, at Florence, early in the fifteenth.

Last and greatest of these inspired exponents of pure religion amid the corruptions of their age was Girolamo Savonarola (1452-98). The grandson of a famous Paduan physician, he himself was originally destined for the medical profession; but, filled with loathing of the evil which he saw everywhere about him, he left his home in secret and entered the Dominican order. In 1483 he preached the Lenten sermons in the Church of San Lorenzo in Florence, and failed conspicuously to find his public, his harsh voice and plain style of oratory being greatly against him. It was not till 1490, when he began to preach in the garden of San Marco, that the Florentines awoke to the fact that they had a prophet in their midst; and if any doubt concerning his extraordinary powers remained, it was dissipated by his Cathedral sermons during the following year. There was nothing in the doctrinal sense new in his message. His theology was that of Aquinas, his idea of the Church absolutely mediæval. But he was a man of lofty spirituality and rigorous asceticism; he had passion, eloquence, and that magnetic kind of personality which is potent to sway and influence men; and his bold denunciations of those in the highest places, his apocalyptic warnings, his mystical raptures, and his direct personal appeals were alike calculated to stir the restless giddy public of his day. The Florentines, who a few years before had turned deaf ears, now poured from shop and market-place, from counting-house and studio, to listen to him; the city shook with excitement; and when Lorenzo the Magnificent sent messages to him imploring him to use more discretion in his utterances, the intrepid reformer replied that Lorenzo himself would do well to remember the judgment to come. Some

of the most famous humanists in that brilliant capital of humanism fell under his spell. Touched by his influence, Pico della Mirandola changed the whole course of his life; Ficino of the Academy, who kept two lamps always burning, the one before the image of the Virgin, the other before the bust of Plato, was for a time his disciple; Politian was deeply moved by him; the dying Lorenzo himself sought his ministrations; while painters like Lorenzo di Credi and Fra Bartolommeo, swayed by his teachings, abandoned their pagan studies and turned to religious themes. Even more marked was the impression made by him upon the masses of the people. For the moment, the flames of the great revival swept on unchecked, consuming everything in their way. The call to repentance echoed far and wide through the luxurious society of Medicean Florence. At carnival time a huge "bonfire of vanities" was built in the piazza, and cards and dice, licentious pictures and amorous verses, rich costumes and splendid jewels, were heaped up together in one vast hecatomb of sacrifice. Rome could no longer ignore invectives against the Church when supported by such practical demonstrations as these. Alexander VI., who had himself been directly attacked, determined accordingly to silence the dangerous demagogue. Characteristically enough, he first tried bribery in the shape of a cardinal's hat. Savonarola replied that the only red hat he would ever accept was the red hat of martyrdom. This was in 1495. In that year a change seems to have come over the spirit of his enterprise. The popular ferment which his preaching had produced began to react upon him; he was himself carried away by it and lost his balance; he saw apocalyptic visions; grew wild in action and more and more frenzied in speech. Unfortunately, too, he was drawn into the whirlpool of public affairs, and this further

hastened his ruin. Yet genuine moral fervour and spiritual enthusiasm still gave substance and meaning to his words. The Roman Curia became more and more alarmed; political excitement and discontent in Florence gave the Pope his opportunity: Savonarola was arrested and put on trial on charges of heresy and sedition. The result was, of course, a foregone conclusion. Imprisonment and protracted torture were the closing stages of the tragedy. Then Savonarola's wonderful career ended in a cruel death by strangling and fire.

Unfortunately, his influence, great as it was while it lasted, did not last long. The society which he sought to save was too far gone in evil to be permanently affected by him. His spiritual fervour produced only a momentary agitation; the demands he made, the standards he set were altogether beyond the reach even of those who had listened most devoutly to his message. The wave of emotionalism passed, reaction set in, and then things were much as they had been before. Only in a most indirect way can Savonarola be associated with the later German movement; he helped Luther, as Villari suggests, by giving to the world "a final proof that it was hopeless to hope in the purification of Rome."

Savonarola's failure is indeed significant. The work of practical reform was wholly alien from the temper of Renaissance Italy. Dissatisfaction with ecclesiastical corruption expressed itself, not in efforts towards amendment, but rather in a flippant cynicism which made light both of the dogmatic formalism on which the Church insisted and of the moral depravity which went along with it. Such flippant cynicism was treated by the Church with characteristic tolerance; ecclesiastical thunders were reserved for those who troubled its peace.

It was only when its teachings were distinctly challenged, therefore, that it awoke from its easy-going indifference and addressed itself to the congenial task of stamping out the seeds of heresy. The fates of Pompanazzi, Giordano Bruno, and Vanini suffice to show upon what ground ecclesiastical authority might always be moved to action. It was quick enough to strike when either its temporal interest or its intellectual supremacy was imperilled.

It was natural at a time when traditional creeds were rudely shaken that earnest thinkers, like Pompanazzi, should anticipate the decay and disappearance of Christianity; equally natural, as attention was so largely turned to the classical past, that some here and there should believe with Gemisthos Pletho in the ultimate displacement of Christianity by some kind of revived pagan philosophy. The most serious religious movement in the Italy of this period, however, is to be found in the efforts of the Platonists—of such men as Ficino and Pico della Mirandola—to reconcile Christian revelation with the religion of ancient Greece. Put forth without the slightest sense of the real meaning of religious evolution, these efforts strike us to-day as singularly jejune and childish. They are nevertheless interesting as a phase of speculative thought through which it was inevitable that certain minds should pass under the combined influences of humanism and theology. But it was upon certain minds only that such combined influences could work with the force required to produce these results. A more common way of circumventing the difficulties which arose from the clash of new thought with ancient dogma was found in the convenient doctrine of the two-fold nature of truth: that theological truth was one thing, and philosophical truth another. This was particularly acceptable to scientific thinkers,

who were thus able to follow their speculations whithersoever they might lead without getting themselves entangled in dangerous theological controversies.

III.—EARLY MOVEMENTS OF REFORM OUTSIDE ITALY

Outside Italy the spirit of discontent, whether with the papacy, or with the ecclesiastical system in general, or with the official creed of Christendom, found expression in repeated abortive movements of protest or revolt. The heretical Albigenses, who abounded in the Valley of the Rhone from about the beginning of the twelfth century onward, may be included among the early reformers on account of their opposition to the dogmas and discipline of the Roman Church. They were practically wiped out by Innocent III. and Simon de Montfort in the twenty years' war (1209-29), in which the whole country of Languedoc was given over to fire and the sword. Almost contemporaneously with these another sect arose in the south of France from the teachings of Peter Waldo, of Lyons, who, having read the New Testament for himself and discovered how much at variance with its explicit directions was the existing state of the Church, initiated a movement for the restoration of apostolic Christianity. The inspiring purpose of the Waldenses was more purely practical than that of the Albigenses, with whom, however, they were commonly confused, and whose fate they partly shared. But notwithstanding continual and drastic persecution they spread to other portions of France, to Switzerland, and even to Italy, until at length, in 1488, Innocent VIII. succeeded in organising a crusade against them, which was carried to a successful issue in the pitiless spirit and with all the accompanying atrocities which history too often associates with outbursts of ecclesiastical zeal.

A remnant survived this holy war of extermination and kept the sect alive. It merged with the Calvinists after the Reformation.

In dealing with these manifestations of the insurgent spirit the Church had found it relatively easy, by the employment of physical force, to keep the upper hand. It encountered greater difficulties farther north. Of Wyclif and the Lollards I shall speak later. Here it is necessary only to point out that the teachings of that English herald of the Reformation were rapidly carried to the newly-founded University of Prague by Oxford students and members of the suite of Richard II.'s Bohemian queen; that there they were caught up and appropriated by John Huss; and that the great Bohemian movement of the early fifteenth century was thus in large part a direct product of English inspiration. The downfall of Huss was compassed by a policy of peculiar infamy: the imperial safe-conduct under which he had appeared before the Council of Constance was immediately set at naught on the ground that it was unlawful to keep faith with a heretic; and he, like his disciple, Jerome of Prague, just before him, was sent to the stake. Once more—this time by shameful perfidy—the Church had triumphed. But its victory was dearly bought. Political causes combined with popular indignation aroused by Huss' death to bring about the Bohemian war, which, with its innumerable complications, was for many years the occasion of grave anxiety at Rome. In the end peace was secured, in part by force, in part by compromise. But the war itself had disturbed the mind of Europe, while the signal successes of the Bohemian peasants against the trained troops of the Emperor had furnished a striking proof of the rising power of the common man. Nor did the murder of Huss by any means involve the cessation of his spiritual

influence. Before many years were over preachers of his gospel were busy in a work of propagandism which extended from Scotland in the north to Spain in the south. Everywhere the seeds of the new religious thought were thus being scattered far and wide, some, indeed, to fall on rocky ground, but some on fruitful soil. Had the Hussites commanded the resources of the printing press it is very possible that Luther's work might have been very largely accomplished a hundred years before his time. As it was, the great Bohemian revolt, like the earlier movements in France and England, was a premonition of the final challenge against existing ecclesiasticism which was presently to shake Europe from end to end. Here and there, at least, men were keenly alive to the fatal difference between the Christianity they saw about them and that of which they read in their New Testament; here and there, such clear perception of what was wrong in the modes and teachings of the Church prompted efforts for a return to purer and simpler forms of life and faith. From generation to generation, in the face of persistent persecution, the spirit of reform thus remained alive. It was reserved for the Germany of the early sixteenth century to make that spirit effective.

As it is easy to explain the priority of Italy in the revival of learning, so it is easy to explain the priority of Germany in the real work of the Reformation.

Germany's great opportunity was the result of the combination of many conditions. It was first of all to Germany that Italy transmitted the quickening impulse of the intellectual awakening of the Renaissance. The new humanistic influence, turned directly into channels of practical activity, did much to precipitate revolution in the sphere of religious thought. Germany was at the same time in a state of social upheaval and seething

discontent. Everywhere there were symptoms that the old order of things was fast breaking up. The feudal nobles were against the towns and the merchants; the great capitalists were against the guilds; the poor were against the rich; industrial troubles were rife, and were suddenly intensified by a mysterious rise in prices, the causes of which have never yet been satisfactorily explained. Such general unrest was obviously favourable to a revolutionary movement in any field and along any lines. In a special sense it was favourable to any movement against the Church, for in Germany the ecclesiastical abuses of the age flourished in their grossest forms. The enormous wealth of the clergy; the princely state of the great feudal prelates; the extortions practised under the forms of innumerable levies for all sorts of purposes—these things had long since aroused a spirit of impatience among the masses of the people; and how much popular hatred of the Church was essentially social in its character is shown by the fact that priests and Jewish money-lenders were embraced together in a single comprehensive condemnation. Already some of the vital ideas of social reform had found emphatic expression. Sebastian Brant, for example, the friend of Wimpheling, had voiced the general discontent with many things in church and state in his famous satiric poem, the "Narrenschiff"; while the great Strassburg preacher, Geiler, had boldly used the book as the text of a course of sermons which still further popularised its teachings. The common consciousness which was ready to respond to the message of any new prophet was thus very different in quality and depth of feeling from that to which Savonarola had made his appeal. Moreover, the traditional antagonism between Germany and Rome, representing the ancient rivalry of empire and papacy, has also to be

borne in mind, for we must never forget how much national sentiment had to do with Germany's final repudiation of papal supremacy.

Many causes had thus been at work preparing the way for the Teutonic revolt. The hour was at hand. In Luther, the man came with the hour. Had he not appeared, we may be certain that another man would have arisen by whom his work would have been done instead; by whom, indeed, it is quite possible to argue, it might conceivably have been more wisely done. But it was Luther who was swept by a current, the direction of which no one at the moment perceived, into the position of leadership; and however otherwise we may judge him, we cannot deny that for leadership he was peculiarly fitted. It was he who unconsciously precipitated the world-crisis which is now always associated with his name. It was he who so stamped his tremendous personality upon the whole movement that, ignoring the stricter historical perspective, we think of him as the actual creator of the Reformation.

IV.—THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY

If the drama of the German reformation begins with Luther, there is still a prologue to that drama, the chief figures in which are Reuchlin and Erasmus, of whom Hutten said that together they lifted the German nation out of barbarism. They have a special interest for us here, because they show the close connection between humanism and the renaissance in religion.

I have already said something about the Reuchlin controversy and the attack upon obscurantism to which it gave rise. It was in this controversy that the new learning first came to blows with the old theology.

Reuchlin dealt with the text of the Old Testament primarily as a philologist. In that one fact lies his particular claim to recognition among the motive-forces in the intellectual history of his time. Despite his own subsequent tendency towards mysticism, he set aside the allegorical exegesis of scholastic theologians, and sought instead, by the application of linguistic knowledge, to discover the literal meaning of what he read. In taking this course he was the first to reveal clearly the immense utility of the apparatus and methods of the new learning in the interpretation of the Scriptures. He also made the new learning a rival to theology. Boldly correcting St. Augustine and calling attention to the "innumerable defects" of the Vulgate, he tacitly maintained that questions of scholarship had to be settled by the scholar, and that where such were at issue it was for the specialist to dictate to the theologian, and not for the theologian to dictate to the specialist. It is thus easy to understand why the Reuchlin controversy broadened out into a general quarrel between the supporters of the old theology and the advocates of humanism, and why Reuchlin himself takes his place among the pioneers of the intellectual revival in the religious field.

While, however, Reuchlin's influence deserves some emphasis, it counted little after all in comparison with that exerted by his younger contemporary, Erasmus. Of him it has been said that he was by far the greatest single figure in the history of the Reformation north of the Alps, Luther alone excepted. True as this is, it does not quite adequately define Erasmus's position. To get him into his proper perspective we have to remember that the original impulse behind the movement of which Luther later obtained control was largely provided by his teaching. In the familiar phrase, it was he who laid the egg which Luther hatched, though

he himself greatly regretted that Luther should have hatched a fighting cock out of it.

All the root ideas of the reform movement were in fact explicitly set forth in his writings. He denounced the worldliness which had entered into the Church to the destruction of its Christian purity. He attacked the greed and dirt, the ignorance and vulgarity of the friars. He condemned the lives of ecclesiastics of all grades, from the poorest mendicants at one end of the scale to the cardinals and the Pope at the other. He emphasised the grievous burden of monastic vows. He protested against the superstitions which disgraced the current creed of Christendom, and the formalism which had taken all the spiritual life out of its public worship and made it an empty thing. He satirised the sterile subtleties and ridiculed the pretensions of scholastic theologians. He laid bare the wickedness of the traffic in indulgences. All this he did in his "Praise of Folly," published in 1509—that is, some two years before Luther's first journey to Rome. Elsewhere he taught the religion of the heart in opposition to the religion of ceremonial observances. Especially in his "Enchiridion Militis Christiani," or "Handbook of the Christian Soldier," he sent the individual man straight to the Bible, at the same time insisting that the text of scripture must not be wrested from its plain meaning or buried beneath allegorical glosses, but must be interpreted in the light of reason and common sense. In virtue of its strongly individualistic quality particularly, this book is in direct line with the teachings of the later reformers.

Erasmus's most signal service to the cause of the Reformation was, however, rendered in his labours on the New Testament. It was through these that he most fully realised his own central purpose—the destruction

of the evils which result from ignorance and obscurantism. His great edition of the New Testament, published at Basel in 1516, contained in parallel columns the original text and a new Latin rendering of his own. The object of the Greek text was to put the original foundation documents of Christianity into the hands of scholarly men, to the end that they might be enabled to penetrate beneath the accumulated masses of commentary and speculation, and to discover for themselves what it was that the New Testament writers had actually said. In this initial attempt to get back to the sources —an attempt which he followed up in his editions of Jerome and other early Fathers who had written under the immediate influence of early Christian thought— Erasmus was simply carrying the methods of humanism over into the religious field. Its significance lies in the fact that the Church was openly opposed to such union of learning and theology. It had been pronounced a heresy to refer to the original Hebrew or Greek text for a reading, or to maintain that knowledge of such text was requisite to a correct interpretation of scripture. Even more important, however, was the translation which Erasmus published along with the text. It must be remembered that the one and only translation authorised by the Church was the Latin version of Jerome, commonly known as the Vulgate. This had practically supplanted the original text in western Christendom; upon it the Church rested entirely; to it alone it permitted reference to be made; doctrines and proofs were alike based upon it. By the mere issue of a new version differing materially and at many points from the Vulgate, Erasmus directly challenged the authority of the Church; while, in order that the full significance of his work might be made apparent, he added notes in which he called attention to the manifold errors of the Vulgate

and to the differences between its readings and his own. Though the work was dedicated to Leo X., who accepted it without in the least realising all that it implied, Erasmus did not hesitate to state that the famous text, "Upon this rock will I build my church," does not bear the narrow interpretation which adherents of the Petrine tradition had fastened upon it. In this monumental undertaking, then, Erasmus sought to lay the foundations of a new Biblical scholarship. Nor was this all. According to his own assertion, he further hoped that it would ultimately lead not only to a truer knowledge but also to a more popular distribution of the scriptures. It was his desire that the New Testament should be rendered into every vulgar tongue, that the masses of the people as well as the priests should be able to study it, each man for himself. "I wish," he wrote in his preface, "that even the weakest woman should read the Gospels—should read the Epistles of Paul; and I wish that they were translated into all languages, so that they might be read and understood, not only by Scots and Irishmen, but also by Turks and Saracens. I long that the husbandman should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle, that the traveller should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey." In this again Erasmus was raising an issue which was to take a prominent place later in the battle of reform. If the Church had looked askance at independent Latin translations of the Bible, still more of course did every experiment in vernacular translation arouse its antagonism. Pope Innocent III. had reprobated "vulgar" versions on the very grounds mentioned by Erasmus in advocating them—that through them laymen, and even women, were enabled to read the scriptures. Inquisitors distinctly referred to such

versions as a chief cause of the spread of heresy among the people.

Erasmus holds an anomalous place in the history of the Reformation. A chief influence in the beginnings of the movement, he parted company with it as soon as it took practical shape, and refused to follow his own teachings to what would seem to have been their logical issues. While a herald of the movement therefore, he left its control to others, ultimately, indeed, after long balancing and hesitation, throwing the weight of his influence upon the opposing side. His defection was a tragic disappointment to many of the stronger spirits of his age. It filled the simple-hearted Albrecht Dürer with the deepest sorrow: "Ah, God! is Luther dead? Who will henceforth so clearly set forth the gospel to us? Oh! Erasmus of Rotterdam, where art thou?"* In the case of Hutten sorrow flamed into anger. In his "Cum Erasmo Expostulatio" that fiery spirit pours out his indignation against the man whom he chooses to regard as a renegade from the Lutheran party, accusing him roundly of cowardice, time-serving, and dishonesty. "O disgraceful spectacle," he exclaims. "Erasmus has submitted to the Pope. The Pope has charged him not to let the dignity of the Papal Chair be attacked. It is like Hercules in the service of Omphale. Into the service of what a contemptible reprobate he has entered! What a transformation! You who but lately exhumed buried piety, brought the gospel to light again out of holes and corners, and restored religion, are now lending a helping hand to its destruction, banishment, extinction." Nor does he scruple to tax Erasmus with the basest of motives: "If you prefer to side with these parasites we must part. May you live secure among the great, who make presents to you, and

* "Tagebuch der Reise in die Niederlande."

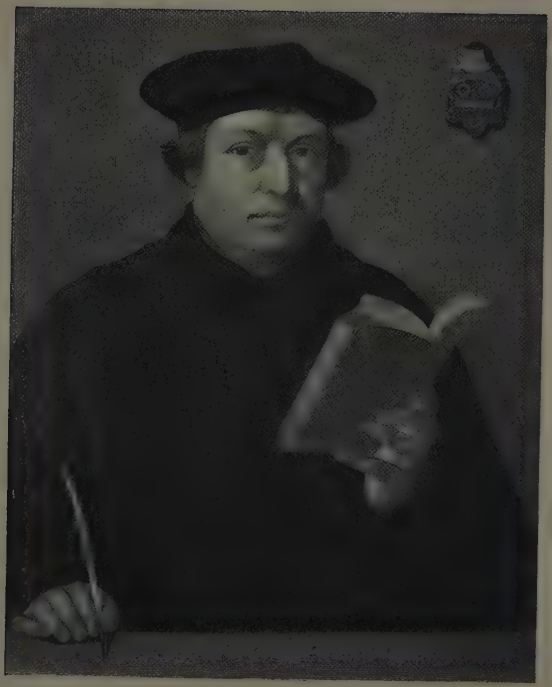
who, if you will but write against Luther, will confer bishoprics and fat livings upon you," with much more to similar effect. It was easy for Erasmus in his reply to these sweeping attacks* to show that his antagonist had monstrously misunderstood his position and misinterpreted his motives. It was not so easy for him then, nor has it been so easy for his apologists since, to justify his course. The best case that can be made out for him must finally rest upon the essential qualities of his personality. His was not the temper of the reformer. He was a man averse from strife, and one who sincerely believed that all the noise and confusion of Luther's revolt was fatal to truth and genuine progress. It was in the nature of such a man to stand aside and temporise. He hated fanaticism in every form; and the Lutheran party was filled with fanaticism. He believed in reasonableness and culture, and the Lutheran party had chosen rather to appeal to emotion and passion. He did his best to preach moderation to both sides; but unfortunately, in that time of agitation, his appeal was without effect. His attitude towards the general questions at issue is perhaps sufficiently shown in some remarks about relic-worship in his "Modus Orandi Deum" (1523). He there refers to the shoes and the linen rags of St. Thomas à Becket which he had seen on a visit to Canterbury. Most of his companions fell on their knees before them. "All this," he writes, "seemed to John Colet, who was with me, an unworthy display. I thought it was a thing that we must put up with until an opportunity should come to reform it without disturbance." These words are very significant as a revelation of Erasmus's temper. Unfortunately, however, as he never appears to have

* "Spongia Erasmi adversus Aspergines Hutteni" ("A Sponge to wipe away Hutten's Aspersions").

learned, it is scarcely possible to avoid disturbance when we get to close quarters with mighty evils. If the work of reform is to be carried on at all, it will be by men who are as little afraid of disturbance as they are for their own safety. Goethe, to whom the attitude of the great apostle of culture was naturally extremely sympathetic, regretted that the shaping of the destinies of the Reformation should ultimately have rested with Luther instead of Erasmus. We may or may not be inclined to share the regret. We should at least recognise its futility. In such a time of crisis, leadership will inevitably devolve upon the strong and resolute man.

The beginnings of the Lutheran movement furnish a striking illustration of Aristotle's dictum that revolutions arise from great causes but small events. The train of gunpowder had long been laid; but when the Augustinian monk dropped his spark upon it, he himself did not in the least anticipate the tremendous explosion which followed.

Martin Luther sprang from a sturdy peasant stock. His father Johann, a rough, upright, impulsive man, migrated from the family home in Thuringia, and settled as a slate miner in Eisleben, in Saxony. There the future reformer was born on St. Martin's Eve (Nov. 10), 1483. His parents were miserably poor, yet they resolved that their boy should be properly educated and afterwards trained for the law. On the completion of his school course he was accordingly sent to the University of Erfurt. There he took his master's degree in 1505. Before this, however, a radical change had begun in him. The origin of this change has been sought in various causes—in the death of a friend, in his own great peril during a terrific thunderstorm, in a chance examination of a Vulgate Bible in the Uni-



Martinus Luther

versity library. These alleged causes may belong to history or to legend. What is certain is that with startling suddenness Luther was awakened to an intense realisation of spiritual things. In opposition to his father's wishes he resolved to embrace the monastic life, and entered the convent of Augustinian monks at Erfurt. Years later he dedicated his tractate on "The Monastic Life" to his father in the simple words, "You were right, dear father, after all." But, for the time being, he submitted himself to the severest discipline of vigil, fast, and penance. It was for him a season of fierce struggle and awful agony. He felt crushed beneath the burden of his sins; a profound melancholy fell upon him; neither his austerities, nor his industry, nor his earnest theological studies served to bring him the peace of mind for which he craved. No pen, he afterwards declared, could adequately describe the anguish of that terrible time. He was fast drifting into the absolute despair of a soul that knows itself eternally lost, when he attracted the attention of Johann Staupitz, the vicar-general of the Augustinian Congregation. Very gently and wisely did that pious man deal with the young monk's difficulties; he revoked the order of his superior that he should not read the Bible; he indicated to him the way which he believed would lead him out of darkness into light. Long afterwards Luther told Staupitz that it was he who had first pointed him towards the great truth by the apprehension of which he had found salvation. But the actual revelation of it came through his personal study of St. Paul and Augustine. It came in the form of the central evangelical doctrine of justification by faith—the forgiveness of sins freely granted by Divine mercy to all those who put their trust in Christ's redeeming grace. It was thus through his own spiritual experiences that

Luther laid the foundations upon which he was presently to build.

Ordained priest in 1507, he left Erfurt the following year to become an inmate of the Augustinian monastery at Wittenberg and a teacher in the newly-established University there. Alike by his lectures and by his sermons, the words of which, as Melanchthon said, were "born not on the lips but in the heart," he soon began to make an impression upon his students and fellow-monks. The Rector, who heard him occasionally, thought that his strange fancies might well give the doctors cause for trouble later on.

In the autumn of 1511 came his memorable journey to Rome, undertaken on business connected with his order. He went there in the spirit of the devout pilgrim. He saw with amazement and horror the glaring iniquities of the Sacred City. Yet still, in his own subsequent language, "an insane Papist," he strove rather to stifle his indignation than to find a vent for it. Once only, it seems, did it quite overmaster him. This was when, according to the practice of the pilgrims, he was climbing on his knees the so-called Scala Santa, which legend declares to have been the stairway of Pilate's judgment seat. Suddenly the words flashed upon his mind, "The just shall live by faith." The impious absurdity of what he was doing was too much for him. He rose to his feet and walked down.

So he returned to his work in Wittenberg, zealous for reform, yet unshaken in his loyalty to Pope and Church; took his degree as a Doctor of Theology in 1512; continued his studies in the New Testament, Augustine, and the mediæval mystics; and by his sermons and discourses greatly extended his influence and fame. Justification by faith was already the text and the key-note of all his teaching. Yet still the

thought of schism had not yet entered his mind. Now came the incident which was in the sequel to drive an obedient son of the Church into open rebellion against its authority. That incident was the appearance in Wittenberg of a Dominican monk, Johann Tetzel, as a hawker of Papal indulgences.

Originally, an indulgence meant the remission of the penitential discipline which, even when a sin was forgiven, was deemed necessary for its expiation. Later, indulgences took the form of commutation; almsgiving to the poor, money payments for religious or charitable purposes, pilgrimages, and other pious works were substituted for regular canonical penances. During the period of the crusades, for instance, special indulgences were granted to those who fought for the cause of the Church. By this time, the conception of the indulgence had greatly expanded; it was now regarded as satisfying not only the demands of canonical justice, but also the justice of God to the remission or relaxation of the pains of purgatory. This expansion went on stage by stage with the development of the theory of the *thesaurus meritorum*, or Treasury of Merits, composed of the infinite merits of the Saviour and the good works of supererogation done by the saints and all holy men and women, living and dead. As all the faithful are members of one body, and the good works of each member are, as it were, the common property of all, this treasury was held to form a kind of fund which could be drawn upon in case of need, and the drafts applied, on the vicarious principle, to making up the incompleteness in good works of the sincerely repentant but imperfect brethren. For a long time indulgences were issued sparingly and care was exercised concerning them. Their enormous multiplication followed, along with many other abuses, the great western schism.

Then they were discovered to be a source of enormous revenue by popes who were in chronic need of money; and far worse abuses grew up when, as articles of sale, they were distributed for payment by monks who were financially interested in them. Hence arose that traffic in indulgences which, before Luther's attack, had already kindled the righteous anger of many who had the good of the Church at heart. "The court of Rome clearly has lost all sense of shame, for what could be more shameless than these continual indulgences," wrote Erasmus to Colet. "Virtue and heavenly blessings are bought and sold in Rome," Hutten declared in one of his caustic epigrams; "you may even buy the privilege of sinning in the future." The subtle theologian might indeed protest that no such privilege was covered by the doctrine of indulgences. Like other reformers, Luther was indifferent to logic chopping in such a matter, and looked at it from the point of view of those great masses of the people who knew and cared nothing for fine scholastic distinctions. In 1516 he was already beginning to preach against indulgences. Next year Tetzel's arrival stirred his feelings to fever heat. We cannot wonder at this. If the traffic in indulgences was as a general principle vicious, the special business in which Tetzel was engaged, and his method of conducting it, were vicious in a supreme degree.

Leo X. wanted money for sundry purposes, among them the continuation of work on the great church in Rome which his predecessor had begun. He proclaimed a plenary indulgence—a complete remission of all penance—the chief condition for obtaining which was a money contribution to his building fund. This indulgence was farmed by the Archbishop of Mainz, and the sale of the tickets, or Papal Letters, was entrusted by him to Tetzel as his agent. Tetzel thereupon began his itinerary

from town to town. At each town he entered a great procession met him with banners and candles, and the church bells were set ringing as the papal bull proclaiming the indulgence was borne triumphantly through the streets on a cloth of purple and gold. Everywhere in his sermons he made the most amazing assertions concerning the efficacy of the wares which he offered to the eager crowds which gathered about him: let them pay the price, and not only would their own sins be remitted, but the souls of their dead friends would also be instantly released from purgatory. In due course he entered Wittenberg. Luther soon learned of his doings. "God willing," he exclaimed, "I will beat a hole in his drum." On the day before the great festival of All Saints, when hundreds of country folk flocked into the town to inspect the relics displayed in the Castle Church, he nailed to the door of that church 95 theses, or propositions, concerning indulgences. These theses were in Latin. A German version was, however, made at the same time; and both original and translation were at once sent to the University printing press for multiplication.

In these theses Luther maintained that indulgences have to do only with the satisfaction required by the Church in the sacrament of penance and with penalties canonically imposed; that they can remit neither guilt nor divine punishment for sin, since these are both in God's hand; that they have no efficacy for souls in purgatory; that as the repentant Christian receives God's forgiveness direct, he does not need an indulgence; that the Treasury of Merits cannot be the merits of Christ or the saints, since these are efficacious without the Pope's intervention; and that the true Treasury of Merits is the Holy Gospel of the Grace of God. A certain efficacy in indulgences is conceded; but Luther

is most concerned to emphasise their narrow limitations. Their power, he declares, has been greatly exaggerated; ideas of their mysterious value have been deliberately popularised by unscrupulous persons interested in them.

The publication of these theses furnished a sensational illustration of the potency of the printing press. Luther woke up to find himself a power far beyond Wittenberg—far beyond Germany.

At first the Pope paid little attention to what he regarded as a trivial dispute. Urged to action by advisers who saw farther, he ordered Luther to Rome to answer for his conduct. The Elector Frederick interfered, and instead of Luther's going to Rome, Cardinal Cajetan was sent as Papal Legate to Augsburg to examine him and adjudge the case. Ill qualified for his task, Cajetan lost his temper and demanded a formal recantation, which Luther refused. In a public debate with a former friend, Dr. Eck, he found himself compelled by that astute antagonist to go farther than he had intended in his opposition to Rome. He was thus helped to the clarification of his ideas, and was astonished to discover, as he put it, that he was "a Hussite without knowing it, and that St. Paul and Augustine had been Hussites." He then addressed himself to the publication of treatises which had an enormous circulation and exercised a profound influence on German thought.

By this time the Pope was seriously alarmed, and issued a bull, "Exurge Domine," which reached Wittenberg along with a command to the Elector to deliver Luther up as a heretic. Amid tremendous excitement Luther publicly burned the bull outside the city walls beyond the Elster Gate. This was on Dec. 10, 1520. Papal bulls had been burned before, but only by strong

kings with armies at their backs. By this daring act a simple monk openly defied the Pope to do his worst. In April of the following year Luther was ordered to appear in Worms before the first Diet of the newly-elected Emperor Charles V. His enemies threatened loudly; his friends were filled with anxiety; he knew well that he was taking his life in his hands. But with a quiet heroism that thrilled all Germany he obeyed the summons. "Huss was burned, but not the truth with him," was his answer to one who warned him of his danger. Standing alone before Emperor, electors, and bishops in the Diet, Luther is one of the grandest figures in history. He was called upon to retract. He replied that he could retract nothing unless he was convinced by scripture and reason that he was wrong. A futile attempt was made by the papal party to send him to the stake; the case of Huss actually being cited as precedent. Then an edict against him was obtained by treachery; but the friendly Elector insured his safety by kidnapping him and keeping him in concealment. His German translation of the New Testament was the principal occupation of his twelve months' enforced seclusion. All Germany was now in a state of religious and social ferment; the rising of the free nobles, the Peasants' War, and the spread of the spirit of fanaticism among the masses, together brought grave perils into Church and state. Luther has been unjustly blamed for disturbances which in fact arose naturally from the general ferment of the time. His own efforts to arrest the progress of lawlessness, however we may judge his attitude and policy, must be taken into account in any critical estimate of his work in reform. But despite his labours for sanity and order, such disturbances, the Peasants' War particularly, were a serious blow to the Lutheran movement; they broke up its unity, and

checked the progress of the sentiment of nationality which it had helped to kindle. In the year which saw the end of the great popular rising, and the outburst of an open quarrel between him and Erasmus, Luther took the momentous step of marrying Katharina von Bora, one of the nuns who under the influence of his teaching had repudiated their ascetic vows. His married life was singularly happy; but it was not allowed to interrupt his labours as author and organiser. Henceforth, however, his intellectual history was one not of growth and expansion, but of petrifaction and the dogmatic hardening of his thought. He was thus led into bitter quarrels with former associates, among them Zwingli, and to absolute refusal to extend the hand of fellowship to the Swiss reformers. The Augsburg Confession of 1530 formulated and codified the Lutheran creed. This marks the definite establishment of Protestantism in Germany. Few events of importance occurred in the remaining sixteen years of Luther's life. He died at Eisleben in 1546.

It is important to appreciate the gradual course of Luther's divergence from Rome. When he made his original protest against the indecency of Tetzel's proceedings, he did so as a loyal son of the Church, never for a moment doubting that he would have the hearty support of his bishop and the approval of the Pope. He began by believing fully in the right of the Church to impose judgment. Urged to appeal, he wrote to the legate that in accordance with precedent he would appeal from the Pope ill informed to the Pope better informed. His next step was the appeal from Pope to council. It was only after he had passed through these transitional stages of thought that he declared explicitly to Cardinal Cajetan that the voice of the Pope was the voice of God only when what the Pope said was in

conformity with the teachings of Holy Scripture. It was the great debate with Eck which drove him to the open assertion of the fallibility of the Church and the right of private judgment.

On the historical side, and considered as part of the general movement of the time in life and thought, the Lutheran revolution is significant for three reasons.

In the first place, there is the pure individualism of Luther's doctrine. The eternal welfare of each individual soul depends upon that soul's direct and personal relations with God. There is no need of machinery. No human agency must come between the soul and God.

Hence, secondly, the essential anti-sacerdotalism of his teaching. With him the lay spirit enters religion. In order that the individual soul may be brought face to face with God, the whole vast superstructure of ecclesiasticism, with all its pretensions, is swept away. As a result, the special sanctity of the priesthood and of the so-called "religious" life is denied. The spiritual priesthood of all believers is proclaimed. All human relationships are made sacred. Men and women whose lives are passed in the ordinary routine of earthly duties, in the family, the workshop, the world, have just as holy a "vocation" as that of the celibate and the recluse. By the marriage of the priests the hieratic caste is destroyed. Thus at every point Luther helped to break down the mediæval distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the Church and the world.

Finally, the Lutheran movement was fundamentally German and national. Luther appealed to the German people. He did so in his translation of the Bible, which, though only one of many translations, had this pecu-

liarity, that it was the first to use German at once racy, clear, and good—the sort of German which, as he himself desired, could be understood and enjoyed by "the mother in her home, the children in the street, the common man in the market place." Incidentally, he threw the weight of his influence into the cause of national liberty, as well as individual liberty, against the despotism of Rome. The German patriot had already begun to realise that Germany would never be a nation while the continual interference of the Pope in all its domestic affairs was permitted. Luther's revolt was in harmony with this growing nationalistic sentiment. Political bondage bulked large in the eyes of men like Hutten, with whom the Reformation at once became a political movement. Nor is this all. Luther asserted nationalism not against Papacy only, but against the Empire as well. Charles V.'s attempt to restore the Empire was the last dream of the middle ages in politics. In this attempt he was foiled by Luther. When he was crowned by the Pope in Rome in 1530 not one German prince was present. It is true that in Germany itself the Reformation did not tend to unity but to distintegration. This, however, was the result rather of existing conditions than of the Reformation. In the larger view, Charles's failure to realise his imperial ambition marks the close of a chapter in political history. Luther destroyed at once the mediæval conception of the Papacy and the mediæval conception of the Empire.

V.—THE REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND, FRANCE, AND ENGLAND

The special historical importance of the German Reformation justifies our relatively detailed treatment of

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it. The movements of reform in other parts of Europe must be more briefly dealt with.

Almost contemporary with the German Reformation, and independent of it, revolt against Latin Christianity was successfully accomplished in Switzerland under Huldreich (Ulrich) Zwingli. One year Luther's junior, Zwingli was a disciple of the new learning which had by this time reached Switzerland. He read Plato, and he brought the critical spirit of humanism to bear upon the interpretation of the New Testament. Like Luther, he was stirred to open attack upon ecclesiastical abuses by the scandal of the traffic in indulgences. Then he entered upon a strenuous career as a preacher of a Gospel Christianity substantially in harmony with that of the Wittenberg apostle. His own canton of Zurich seceded from Rome in 1525. Thence the movement which he had initiated spread rapidly over Switzerland and even into Southern Germany. His great controversy with Luther on various points of doctrine, notably the sacrament of communion, introduced dissensions into the Reformed Church which were in the issue to prove fatal to all hope of unity. A little later, the Forest Cantons, clinging obstinately to the Roman Church, formed an alliance against those other cantons which had embraced Protestantism. Civil war ensued, in one of the battles of which Zwingli was slain. In Switzerland, therefore, as in Germany, internal feuds followed upon a movement which was fundamentally national in character. But for this result the loose character of the Swiss federation was largely responsible.

Soon after Zwingli's death, Switzerland became the centre of another reform movement under the leadership of the French refugee, Jean Calvin. Study of the Greek New Testament had converted Calvin to Protestantism. Persecution compelled him to fly from France and to

seek an asylum in Switzerland. At Basel in 1536 he produced his famous "Institutes of the Christian Religion," in which he systematised the principles of that extreme type of Augustinian theology which has ever since been known by his name. A man of marvellous intellectual powers, but at the same time narrow and intolerant, he maintained a veritable "rule of the saints" during his twenty years' residence in Geneva, and by the rigour of his censorship constituted himself a kind of general dictator in matters of both belief and practice. The burning of the heretical Servetus, the most hideous blot on the history of the Reformation, must to a large extent at least be laid to his charge. But his influence was not confined to Geneva or to Switzerland. The French Huguenot movement owed much to his teaching; John Knox was his disciple; the Scotch Covenanters and the English Puritans alike have to be included among his followers.

In France the reform movement which, though at the outset of native growth, was greatly stimulated by the example of Geneva, failed for various reasons to assume anything like a national character. It was thus almost entirely a movement of religious sectaries and political parties, and never led to any general rupture with Rome. The persecution of the Protestants carried on by Francis I. and his son Henry II. tended to foster instead of to discourage the new faith, which meanwhile continued to grow in wealth, prestige and power. Then it became a factor in the complicated political controversies of that age of rivalries and intrigues. As a consequence the whole country was rent during more than thirty terrible years by a series of fierce religious wars, in which all patriotic feeling was destroyed, and by which the very existence of the nation was imperilled. More than a million Frenchmen are said to have perished

in these conflicts. A resolute attempt was made in 1572 by the fiendish Catherine de' Medici to exterminate the Huguenots in the massacre of St. Bartholomew. To celebrate this appalling crime the joybells were rung in Rome, a special "Te Deum" was performed at St. Peter's, and the Pope had a medal struck and proclaimed a year of jubilee. But the massacre was as useless as it was diabolical. Stunned for the moment, the Huguenot cause soon revived. It was not till Henry IV.'s Edict of Nantes in 1598 that peace was at length secured. By that edict general freedom of conscience in religion was recognised, and the French reformers thus gained a substantial victory. The settlement was, however, only temporary. By the revocation of the edict in 1685 Richelieu practically annihilated Protestantism in France.

Strikingly different was the course of things in England, where conditions existed and forces were at work which secured for the reform movement a success even more complete than that which had crowned the Lutheran revolt in Germany.

The history of the English Reformation begins in the fourteenth century, when unmistakable signs became apparent of widespread dissatisfaction with the Roman Church alike on political, intellectual, and moral grounds. Even so gentle a poet as Gower was stirred to indignation by the ecclesiastical abuses which he saw everywhere about him. Chaucer's was not the temper of the reformer, yet the vivid pictures given in the "Canterbury Tales" of the typical churchmen of the time—the pleasure-loving, worldly monk, the easy-going friar, the lying, unscrupulous pardoner—possess a satirical bearing which it is impossible to ignore. In "Piers Plowman" mild reproof and humorous satire are exchanged for righteous wrath, and fierce invectives are

hurled at a corrupt Church and its unworthy priesthood. Contemporary literature thus exhibits great popular unrest. That unrest assumed practical shape in the work of John Wyclif.

It was about 1360 that this first of our reformers entered upon his long struggle with the mendicant friars. Later he became prominent as a strong opponent of papal interference in national affairs, and as an ardent supporter of secular rights against the extreme claims of the Church. The great western schism and the scandals which followed exerted a profound influence upon his thought. His attacks upon the Church now became more radical; they no longer stopped at manifest abuses, or dealt exclusively with the unholy greed of the Papacy, its shameless misuse of power, and the profligate lives of the clergy. Taking his stand upon the Bible—the Law of the Lord, as he called it—he began boldly to demand how far the existing state of things corresponded with its teachings. He expounded the scriptures in class room and from pulpit; he sent itinerant preachers—his "poor priests"—through the land to spread his doctrines far and wide. While hitherto he had written his tractates in Latin, he now used English, that his thoughts might become the possessions of the common people; and with the help of his disciples he produced an English version of the Bible—the first version in any vernacular tongue. In particular, he proclaimed the essentially inward and personal character of true religion in opposition to the formalism of the times, and emphasised a conception of the Church as an organisation of all believers, and of divine mercy as free to all without the intervention of any human agency, which distinctly anticipated some of the leading tenets of the German Reformation.

Wyclif's followers, the Lollards (as they came to

be called from about the middle of the fourteenth century), soon went beyond their master, their petition to Parliament in 1395 setting forth their opposition, among other things, to the temporal possessions of the Church, clerical celibacy, transubstantiation, prayers for the dead, pilgrimages, image-worship, and compulsory confession. They further maintained that the allegiance of the Christian was demanded only to God's law as laid down in the scriptures, that anyone who studied the scriptures in the proper spirit could understand them, and that therefore no priestly interpretation is necessary. The persecution of the sect began under Henry IV., when the first Lollard martyr, William Sawtré, was sent to the stake, and continued with little intermission down to the reign of Henry VII. After this Lollardism became part of the general Protestant movement, and helped from the first to indoctrinate it with Puritan ideas.

Lollardism represents the popular and democratic side of the early reform spirit in England. Its scholarly side is to be found in the efforts of the men who are commonly grouped together as the Oxford Reformers. Reference has already been made to the achievements of these men in the cause of English learning, and the point now to be brought forward is that in their case the impulse towards the regeneration of religion was born directly of their humanism. Grocyn deserves special recognition as the first man to apply the new learning to theology and to interpret the text of scripture in the light of Greek scholarship. But he was soon followed by Colet, who in his turn, as we have seen, greatly influenced Erasmus and More. Throughout the Oxford movement we can perceive the workings of the Renaissance spirit as a general solvent of mediæval ideas; but though the reformers spoke freely

about the moral abuses which pervaded the Church and about the superstitions which choked the plain teachings of the Gospels, they neither desired nor anticipated any breach of communion with Rome. In fact, when news of the German crisis reached England, More instantly took alarm, and from that moment his place was with the upholders of the old order against the forces of revolution let loose by Luther.

To explain how the reform movement in England ultimately led to schism, we must refer to the co-operation of political conditions. The English rupture with Rome was a necessary result of that spirit of nationalism which we have elsewhere found antagonistic to the domination of the Papacy. It was indeed impossible that, situated as England was, its government could long continue to tolerate the perpetual interference of the Pope in its domestic affairs, and, even more, his continual drafts upon the national treasury. English interests, English property, English liberties were all jeopardised by the claims of an Italian prince—and by this time the Pope was little more than an Italian prince—to a right of jurisdiction over English affairs. The revolt of England against Rome, therefore, was in a large measure revolt against foreign rule. This is the aspect of it which Shakespeare expresses in the forcible words in which John repudiates the right of any "Italian prince" to "tithe and toll" in his dominions, and asserts his intention of governing the country as "supreme head" and "without the assistance of a mortal hand." * The immediate cause of the breach between the English Church and the Roman See was Henry VIII.'s quarrel with Clement VII. over his divorce from Catharine of Aragon. But this was the immediate cause only. It merely brought into operation many forces already

* "King John," III. i.

existing and precipitated a crisis which in any event could not long have been postponed.

To follow the history of the Reformation in England from this point on to its consummation under Elizabeth, in whose reign the tide of nationalism was at its height, is here unnecessary. It must, however, be remarked that though the actual work of ecclesiastical and doctrinal reorganisation was carried out by men of conservative temper, who desired so far as possible to preserve the continuity of English religious tradition, radical dissentients soon made their influence felt. The way was thus prepared almost from the beginning for the spread of Puritanism and the rise of Nonconformity. These phenomena are strictly logical developments of the principles involved in the original reform movement.

Again, we have to notice the significance of the Reformation as a manifestation of the characteristic lay spirit of the Renaissance and of its equally characteristic individualism. By virtue of its essentially positive and practical temper Protestantism turned religious emotion into secular channels, and so became a great power in political and social affairs. By virtue of its extremely developed individualism it contained within itself the seeds of its own disintegration. It was soon made one of the heaviest reproaches against Protestantism that it was prolific of heresies and schisms. The charge was well grounded. The continual multiplication of sects is the inevitable consequence of the right of private judgment and of the individualism which the Reformation brought into religion.

VI.—GENERAL RESULTS OF THE REFORMATION

It remains for us to consider the general historical significance of the European Reformation as a whole.

In the first place, regarding it broadly as a renaissance in religion, we must recognise its direct influence upon the Roman Church itself. A primary result of the Protestant revolt was a reformed Catholicism. Now by positive action, now by simple apathy, the Vatican had hitherto nullified every effort, whether of individuals or of councils, for the amendment of even the most glaring abuses. Nemesis came in the great Teutonic outburst. The Church was aroused into a realisation of her true position and her peril; and the result was quickly shown in various ways. The frivolous scepticism which had prevailed at the court of Leo X. passed away. A radical change of spirit was shown under Adrian VI., Clement VII., and Paul III. Henceforth the abominations which had disgraced the papal chair were impossible. Reformation thus led to Counter-reformation. Protestant activity was answered by an immense development in Catholic activity. Rome addressed itself to the task of recovering power and prestige. The establishment in 1540 of the great propagandist Society of Jesus, for the defence of the hierarchy and the spread of Roman dogma against all schismatics and heretics, and for the conquest of new dominions for the Church, was a chief sign of this fresh energy and zeal. Five years later, the Council of Trent, the most important factor in the Counter-reformation, began its deliberations. Conflicting aims were manifest in it throughout. Many of the Catholic princes desired a policy of wise concession with a view to the ultimate restoration of the peace of Europe. The Roman court, on the other hand, was far more concerned to have the new heresies condemned, and the prerogatives of the Papacy reasserted and consolidated. A degree of reform in matters of morals and ecclesiastical government was indeed adopted in the 23rd session.

But the main exertions of the Council were directed to dogmatic theology, and, as its temper was that of dogged conservatism, the breach between Roman Catholic doctrine and that of the reformed Churches was made permanent. The Counter-reformation was, therefore, a moral reformation only. In intellectual matters the Church conceded nothing. It elected rather to remain a mediæval institution in a modern world.

Roman Catholic activity was not, however, fruitless; the Protestant movement was checked, a result to which, it must be remembered, the internal dissensions of the Protestant Churches themselves in no small measure contributed. The unity of Christendom, which had been one outstanding feature of the middle ages, was thus destroyed. Europe was partitioned between the two religious powers, the dividing lines being substantially those which continue to exist to-day.

This suggests a second point of importance. In the rearrangement of the map of Europe the grouping of the nations had its significance. Revolt against Rome was final in Germany for the most part, in Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, England, Scotland, and the Netherlands. Italy, Spain, and France, on the other hand, maintained their allegiance to the Pope. A complete explanation of this segregation could be reached only through a careful analysis of political conditions. But one fact stands out conspicuously: the Reformation succeeded among peoples in whom the Teutonic strain predominated, or who were under Teutonic influence. Among the Romanic peoples it failed. It is evident that in the history of the Reformation racial qualities must be taken into account.

Joined with what has already been said about the effects of the Lutheran revolt in Germany, much of

which is, of course, equally true of the Protestant movement in general, this will sufficiently indicate the bearings of the Reformation on the religious and political sides. We must now glance at its more purely intellectual aspects. It is necessary to begin by marking negations.

In the first place, it is a mistake to assume that the Reformation effected the destruction of dogmatism in religious matters, and the enthronement of reason in its stead. Protestantism merely meant an exchange of tyrants. An infallible Bible was substituted for an infallible Church. The entire edifice of the reformed theology was built on the foundations of the narrowest literalism. If, in Lessing's phrase, Luther freed the world from "the yoke of tradition," he sought to fasten upon it "the more intolerable yoke of the letter," and that yoke has impeded Protestant thought till quite recent times. The methods of the reformers were those of the scholastic philosophers; their modes of thought wholly mediæval. It suited Luther at the beginning of his revolt to appeal to reason against Rome, but he ended by abusing reason only less vehemently than he abused Rome, and by denying its right to a hearing on questions of faith. Even Zwingli, the broadest-minded of the reformers, raised the text of scripture to the level of papal authority; while it was the principal work of Calvin's life to reduce the doctrines of Protestantism to a hard, dogmatic system which should equal the Roman system in rigidity, completeness, and finality.

Nor, secondly, did the Reformation directly encourage the growth of the spirit of toleration. The reformers might talk as loudly as they liked about the right of private judgment, but private judgment for them meant their own private judgment only. As intolerant as the most rancorous zealots of the older

Church, they "upheld the right of private judgment while they burned those whose judgment differed from their own." The freedom they vigorously claimed for themselves they just as vigorously denied to others. They thus practically assumed an intellectual dictatorship as uncompromising as that of Rome, for their infallible Bible necessarily meant nothing more or less than their own infallible interpretation of the Bible. Calvin connived in the murder of Servetus because Servetus differed from him in theology—that is, because Servetus maintained *his* right of private judgment against Calvin's infallibility.

Finally, Protestantism did little for the cause of general enlightenment. It was, indeed, in many ways unfavourable to it. It is a striking fact that the completion of the Reformation was followed all over Europe by a marked increase in the belief in sorcery and the persecution of witches. The reformers were just as obscurantist in their attitude to intellectual questions as the adherents of the older creed, and, as we have already seen, just as bigoted in their hostility to all scientific discoveries and speculations which seemed to them to contradict the Bible. Their infallible Book was, therefore, destined to prove as great an obstacle to intellectual progress as the infallible Church had formerly been. In Germany, in particular, Luther's revolt was in part responsible for a general set-back in culture, and for the long failure of that country to keep pace with other leading European nations.

Judged by immediate results, therefore, the work of the Reformation seems disappointing. But it is not by immediate results only that we have to judge. Looking more widely over the field of modern history, we can now see that the Protestant revolt meant the birth of a new spirit in the world—a spirit the activities of which

the Protestants themselves were afterwards unable wholly to check. The principles upon which it rested involved consequences which its official exponents have continued to repudiate; but those consequences have none the less played a vital part in the world's intellectual development. It soon endeavoured to take back the freedom which it had for the moment bestowed. But in this it failed. The power which it invoked against Rome has been logically turned against its own claims to absolutism and finality. While denying reason, it spread the spirit of rationalism through educated Europe. While rejecting toleration, it led inevitably to the doctrine of liberty of thought. While clinging to the dogmatic authority of the text of scripture, it started the critical methods by which even that authority was presently to be undermined.

CHAPTER V

The Renaissance in Science and Philosophy

I.—SCIENCE DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

It was pointed out in our first chapter that the intellectual sterility of the middle ages was largely due to the dead weight of ecclesiastical authority and the divorce of man from nature, as a consequence of which the mind was forced both to work only within the narrow limits of prescribed dogma, and to seek the materials for its speculations in metaphysical principles rather than in objective reality. The Renaissance in science and philosophy began with the assertion of the right of free inquiry and the reunion of theory with the world of concrete fact.

The long domination of theology had meant the almost complete arrest of science. All learning was forced into the service of the Church, and the study of nature was permitted only on condition that nothing should be discovered which would conflict with or disturb that absolute truth which had been embodied once and for all in its creed. The great names in the history of science during the earlier middle ages are, therefore, those of enemies of the Church, and especially of Arabians, like Avicenna (987-1037) and Averroës (1126-98), both of whom Dante found, along with the virtuous pagans of antiquity, in the limbo of Hell. Moreover, the general spirit bred by theology was as hostile to science as was its dogmatism. With the

enormous development of superstition and the universal belief in marvels and miracles, a supernatural explanation of any phenomenon was always more acceptable than a natural one. Thus physicians fell into disrepute among rigidly orthodox theologians, and were often regarded as atheists by the common people, because they tried to effect cures by physical means instead of by vows, prayers, and the relics of saints. When Giovanni Manardi (Rabelais' master in medicine) asserted that in attacking a disease the doctor should attend more to the beating of the pulse than to the aspects and conjunctions of the stars, he was held to have said something dangerously radical. The spirit of mysticism which thus got mixed up with scientific inquiries was fatal to substantial progress. This was clearly recognised by Bacon.*

Nor was this the worst. From the age of the great Fathers onward, the idea had steadily gained ground that scientific knowledge is dangerous and that the pursuit of it imperils the soul. Thus those who devoted themselves to scientific interests and succeeded in them—such men, for example, as Geber, Sylvester II., Grostête, Albertus Magnus, and Raymond Lully—soon gained a sinister reputation as magicians and adepts in the Black Arts. We may note in particular the significance of the immensely popular "compact legends," in which the theological prejudices of the time were expressed in a picturesque form. Scientific knowledge itself was evil, and the desire to penetrate further into the secrets which God has purposely hidden from the eyes of men could be born only of the spirit of revolt. How, then, could the knowledge be obtained and the desire gratified? By diabolical help. The rebel sold himself to Satan, and realised his impious ambi-

* See, e.g., "Novum Organum." Book I. lxv.

tions at the price of his immortal soul. Hence the famous legend-cycles which grew up about the names of Faust and Roger Bacon. Such strange ideas about Satanic agencies and influences persisted obstinately in the teeth of growing enlightenment. Even in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries papal bulls were issued against alchemists who dabbled in forbidden things and magicians who produced bad weather; while, long after the Revival of Learning and the Reformation, Catholics and Protestants vied with one another in the persecution of sorcerers and witches who were supposed to derive their peculiar and far-reaching powers of evil from direct commerce with the devil himself. It must not be forgotten that Raleigh and Francis Bacon were firm believers in witchcraft and demoniacal possession. Our Elizabethan and early Stuart dramas are full of references to the subject, which show how strong was its hold upon popular imagination.*

The case of Roger Bacon may detain us for a moment, because it will help us to realise the common mediæval attitude towards those who devoted themselves to scientific pursuits. Bacon was, of course, a man of his time, and accepted without demur many of its most childish superstitions; yet few men have ever been more distinctly in advance of average contemporary thought than was this monkish philosopher of the thirteenth century. His actual achievements seem to have been astonishing. But still more astonishing, perhaps, was his clear perception, in that age of scholasticism, of that true method of gaining a knowledge of nature which we definitely associate with his

* "Macbeth" will at once occur to every reader, but this is only one example out of many. It may be noted that the writer of the infamous Joan of Arc scenes in "I. Henry VI." (whoever he may have been—we may hope he was not Shakespeare), gave further currency to the tradition transmitted by Holinshed that the Maid owed her successes to "devilish witchcraft and sorcery."

more famous namesake and successor. As news of his activities got abroad, they were seized upon by the vulgar mind, distorted, magnified, turned into feats of magic; and marvellous tales thus took shape of gazing-crystals and brazen heads endowed with the gift of prophecy. A convenient handle was thus furnished to his fellow monks, who were both jealous and not a little afraid of him. Then theological antagonism came into play. Though he himself was strictly orthodox, and though nothing could be urged against his piety, there were, to use the language of his opponents, "certain suspicious novelties" in his teachings which excited the animosity of the defenders of the faith, among whom we have specially to reckon the "seraphic doctor" Bonaventura, to whom Dante gives high place in the Heaven of the Sun among the great teachers of the Church. A chief charge against him was that he offered natural explanations of natural phenomena, as, for instance, in the case of the rainbow, and argued against Satanic agency in storms and earthquakes. Vigorous efforts were accordingly made to silence him. About 1257 he was thrown into prison in Paris, and deprived not only of human intercourse, but even of the means of writing and study. Released in 1267, he later encountered the opposition of the Franciscans, through whose instrumentality the reading of his books was forbidden, while he was himself again imprisoned. This second confinement also lasted about ten years, after which he retired to Oxford, where two years later—in 1294—he died. No commentary upon this sad story is called for. Roger Bacon was one of the great pioneers of modern science and one of its noble army of martyrs. His reward while living was harassing persecution and twenty years of imprisonment; when dead, a place in vulgar super-

stition as a creature of Satan and a practitioner in the Black Arts.

II.—PHILOSOPHY DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

The tyranny of dogma and the resulting divorce of man from nature were also the chief causes of the sterility of that mediæval theological philosophy which we know as Scholasticism. The great scholastic thinkers —Erigena, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham—were men of extraordinary mental power and acumen; the systems which they constructed with laborious care were marvels of sustained logical power. But their main effort was directed to the merely formal treatment of data furnished not by science, but by the organised doctrines of the Church; their work was not nourished upon reality; their speculations were neither guided nor checked by reference to objective fact. As a result, scholasticism remained practically stationary through the many centuries of its existence; and when it finally disappeared under the combined influences of the religious and scientific movements of the Renaissance, it left behind it little that could be turned to use as a factor in the progress of thought.

The great problem of scholasticism was the complete reduction of theological dogma to systematic logical form. Its aim, therefore, was not the independent quest of truth, for no such independent quest was permitted, but the restatement in rational terms of truth already given. The unchallenged premiss of all scholastic thinking was the absolute finality of the teachings of the Church; and thus the primary business of the philosopher was to find the means by which he could prove that the truth of revelation is also the truth of reason. Philosophy was thus enlisted in the service of

the Church, and was held strictly to her position of subordination. The question of the relation of revelation and reason gave rise, indeed, to fundamentally opposed views. It was attacked from one side by Aquinas, with his theory of two distinct spheres of knowledge; from another side by Duns Scotus, with his assumption of the absolute unity of all knowledge in revelation. In just what way reason could best be made to support and justify faith was, therefore, a matter of fierce discussion, and the rival schools of the Thomists, or followers of Aquinas, and the Scotists, or followers of Scotus, continued to wrangle for upwards of three hundred years. But, whatever their differences, the common object of all the mediæval philosophers was the harmonising of human wisdom with the oracles of the Church. The conditions and methods of scholastic inquiry are thus, from our present point of view, much more important than the subjects dealt with. We must remember that the scholastic thinker was not even allowed to inquire into the value of these subjects, while he was certainly not free to follow up his ideas without consideration of direction or result. Both direction and result were prescribed beforehand. He had at all costs to reach a particular goal. Only the route was left open; and all roads had to lead to Rome. Philosophy existed only to make good by the processes of logic the dogmas which the Church imposed upon all men, and from which there could be no appeal.

Modern critics have found it an easy task to make fun out of the quibbling and subtleties of the scholastics and their fantastic speculations concerning all sorts of trivial matters which came up by the way. Immense intellectual power was wasted upon the most idle and ridiculous questions. "Could God make two hills without an intervening valley?" "Can God ever

know more than He knows that He knows?" "Could God make a stick a yard long which had not two ends to it?" "Can two angels occupy the same space at the same time?" "What happens when a mouse eats the consecrated host?" It is, indeed, amazing that such conundrums—and the foregoing are only examples—were, generation after generation, treated as serious subjects by some of the most brilliant and astute minds which have ever devoted themselves to philosophic themes; and we do not wonder that in his "Praise of Folly" Erasmus turned the battery of his ridicule upon them. On the other hand, it may fairly be contended that in their natural impatience with the obscurantism of the schoolmen, both the humanists and the religious reformers of the Renaissance lost sight altogether of the real metaphysical significance of some of the problems—like the great problem of Nominalism and Realism—which formed the backbone of scholastic discussion. But we are here concerned neither with the absurdities of mediæval speculation, nor with its possible interest to the special student of the history of thought. The one point which we have to keep in mind is that upon which I have already laid stress: the subordination of philosophy to theological dogma, the limits within which it was therefore confined, and the stagnation which was the inevitable result.

One curious feature of scholasticism has, however, to be mentioned: the part played in it by Aristotle. While theology provided the subject matter upon which the philosopher had to work and the conclusions which he was compelled to reach, it was the Aristotelian dialectic which gave him his forms and machinery. The Aristotle in question was not, indeed, the great original Stagirite. He was rather a traditional Aristotle—the creation of the schools. Until the beginning of the

thirteenth century, he was known only through his treatise on logic, and this had been subjected to such continual gloss and exposition, had been so much lectured on, epitomised, and annotated, that in the end, as I have already said, the text itself had been practically buried beneath an enormous mass of superimposed commentary. This gives the point of Giordano Bruno's saying that Aristotle owed more to the University than the University owed to Aristotle. When later other works of "the Grecian doctor," as he was called, found their way into western Europe through the medium of Arabian interpreters, and a better understanding of his real teachings began to spread, the Church took alarm, and from time to time attempted to check the growth of his influence by forbidding the study of various portions of his works. But the domination of Aristotelianism in the perverted shape described remained unbroken down to the end of the Middle Ages, and here and there—as in the University of Paris—till very much later. This meant dogmatism again under another form, as is clearly shown in the anecdote already quoted about the young scholar and the spots on the sun. Studied in a theological spirit, forced into the support of the established creed, Aristotle thus became a pillar of orthodoxy and a bulwark of the faith. His authority was almost as great as that of any Christian teacher. He was invoked to close a discussion as readily as Augustine or Aquinas. Dante called him "the philosopher"; referred to him simply as "he," no other designation being necessary; a famous line in the "Inferno" (iv. 131) described him as "the master of those who know"; an anagram was made out of his name—*Aristoteles* = *Iste sol erat*—"He was the sun"; the Sorbonne proclaimed that to contradict his teaching was to contradict the Church. Thus Petrarch showed

considerable daring when he declared that, after all, Aristotle was only a man; while, when the French humanist, Peter Ramus, who at twenty-one supported the paradoxical thesis that "all that Aristotle had said was false" made a resolute attack upon the authority of the great dictator in the chief centre of scholasticism —the University of Paris—he aroused such fierce antagonism that his treatise was suppressed by royal edict, and his public lectures for a time suspended. How intimate was the association of Aristotle with the schoolmen is curiously shown by the fact that in a woodcut of 1527 by Holbein the younger, the great Greek teacher is shown descending into the outer darkness in the company of a number of representative mediæval philosophers.

III.—THE REVIVAL OF THOUGHT

The decay of scholasticism was brought about by the changing spirit of the new age. It collapsed simply because it was hopelessly out of harmony with the fresh intellectual conditions which resulted from the movements of the Renaissance as a whole. Humanism was naturally against it, and both directly, by its opposition to Roman theology, and indirectly, by its rupture with authority, the Protestant Reformation tended to bring it into disrepute. Incidentally, it may be remarked, the Platonism which was so important an outgrowth from the revival of classical learning was regarded as a counterblast to the Aristotelianism of the mediæval thinkers, and therefore helped to break down the intellectual tyranny of the schools. But the great enemy of scholasticism was, of course, the development of natural science. This was fatal to the claims and mental habits of the old philosophers, because it

liberated thought from dogma, brought the mind of man back to nature and reality, and substituted the scientific method of inquiry for the purely syllogistic processes which had hitherto been in vogue.

One name stands out supreme in this great chapter in the history of the Renaissance. It is the name of Francis Bacon. Due regard being had to the work which other men had done before him or were doing at the same time, Bacon may still be considered as epoch-maker and pioneer. He more than any other thinker represents the transition from mediæval to modern thought. He chiefly was instrumental in turning philosophic effort from the barren wastes of theological and metaphysical speculation into the fruitful field of physical fact. To him in the main belongs the signal honour of overthrowing the old a priorism and establishing the inductive method in its stead. In the doctrines which he promulgated concerning man's relations with nature and the proper means of finding truth, we may mark the culmination of the entire movement of the Renaissance on its purely intellectual side.

Bacon sets forth his conception of the character and object of all true science in his unfinished utopian romance, already mentioned, the "New Atlantis." "This fable," wrote his chaplain and editor, Rawley, in his advertisement to the English version, "my lord devised to the end that he might exhibit therein a model or description of a college, instituted for the interpreting of nature and the producing of great and marvellous works for the benefit of men, under the name of Saloman's House, or the College of the Six Days' Works." This, "the noblest institute, we think, that ever was upon the earth," was "dedicated to the study of the works and creatures of God." It is, in fact, Bacon's

FRANCIS BACON

From the painting by Paul van Somer, in the National Portrait Gallery

dream of a great academy, divided and subdivided according to the special needs of all the different subjects dealt with, but devoted through all its branches to experimental science and the practical arts. "For," as the Father of the House is made to inform his visitors, "the end of our foundation is the knowledge of causes and secret motions of things, and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire to the effecting of all things possible." In this double-sided programme Bacon clearly indicates his idea of what science should be and should accomplish. It should, as he elsewhere puts it, be at once luciferous and fructiferous—light-bringing and fruit-bearing. In other words, it should add to our positive knowledge of things and prove at the same time a practical instrument for the improvement of the lot of man. These ideas recur again and again in Bacon's writings. The discovery of truth by the direct investigation of nature and the application of truth in life are thus the two central principles which lie at the heart of all Bacon's philosophy.

This explains his dissatisfaction, which he already began to feel when a mere boy at Cambridge, with the methods and teachings which were still current in the schools. They were neither luciferous nor fructiferous, but very much the reverse; they were, as he puts it, "strong for disputations and contentions, but barren of the production of works for the benefit of the life of man." Bacon realised at the outset the sterility of mediæval thinking, and he traced this back to the false ends which the schoolmen had sought to compass and to the false procedure to which they were addicted. Upon these topics he discourses at length, along with many other kindred subjects upon which we need not here pause to touch, in his "Advancement of Learning." While learning has been discredited, he argues, by

the prejudices of theologians and politicians, it has been even more seriously hampered and traduced by "those errors and vanities which have intervened amongst the studies themselves of the learned," and especially by those "three distempers of learning"—fantastical learning, contentious learning, and delicate learning—which end respectively in "vain imaginations, vain altercations, and vain affectations." A few points selected from a mass of detail will suffice to show how Bacon falls foul of the schoolmen in regard to various fundamental principles of theory and practice. He attacks them because they had sought the subject-matter of their knowledge in the depths of their inner consciousness instead of the world of outer reality; or, as he phrases it, "in the inquisition of nature, they ever left the oracle of God's works, and adored the deceiving and deformed images which the unequal mirror of their own minds, or a few received authors or principles, did represent unto them." The result was the production of enormous systems of verbiage, which, however astonishing as feats of intellectual ingenuity, were things of verbiage only. "This kind of degenerate learning," he declares, "did chiefly reign amongst the schoolmen, who, having sharp and strong wits, and abundance of leisure and small variety of reading, but their wits being shut up in the cells of a few authors, chiefly Aristotle, their dictator, as their persons were shut up in the cells of monasteries and colleges, and knowing little history, either of nature or time, did out of no great quantity of matter and infinite agitation of wits spin out unto us those laborious webs of learning which are extant in their books. For the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff, and is limited thereby; but if it work upon itself,

as the spider worketh her web, then it is endless, and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit." The reverence for authority and the supine dependence upon the past which were a salient characteristic of the mediæval habit of mind, is another point upon which Bacon dwells as the main reason of the unprogressiveness of scholastic speculation; finality once admitted, he rightly insists that all further discovery of truth is impossible. "And as for the overmuch credit that hath been given unto authors in sciences, in making them dictators, that their words should stand, and not consuls, to give advice: the damage is infinite that sciences have received thereby, as the principal cause that hath kept them low at a stay without growth or advancement. . . . For as water will not ascend higher than the first springhead from whence it descendeth, so knowledge derived from Aristotle, and exempted from liberty of examination, will not rise again higher than the knowledge of Aristotle. And, therefore, though the position be good, *Oportet discentem credere,* yet it must be coupled with this, *Oportet edoctum judicare;* for disciples do owe unto masters only a temporary belief and suspension of their own judgment till they be fully instructed, and not an absolute resignation or perpetual captivity; and therefore to conclude this point, I will say no more, but so let great authors have their due, as Time, which is the author of authors, be not deprived of his due—which is, further and further to discover truth." Another charge—and for him the most serious of all—which Bacon brings against the older followers of learning was that of failure to perceive its true purpose and function. "But the greatest error of all the rest is the mistaking or misplacing of the last or furthest end of knowledge.

For men have entered into a desire of learning and knowledge, sometimes upon a natural curiosity or inquisitive appetite; sometimes to entertain their minds with variety and delight; sometimes for ornament and reputation; and sometimes to enable them to victory of wit and contradiction; and most times for lucre and profession; and seldom sincerely to give a true account of their gift of reason to the benefit and use of men; as if there were sought in knowledge a couch whereupon to rest a searching and restless spirit; or a terrace for a wandering and variable mind to walk up and down with a fair prospect; or a tower of state, for a proud mind to raise itself upon; or a fort or commanding ground, for strife and contention; or a shop, for profit or sale; and not a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate. But this is that which will indeed dignify and exalt knowledge, if contemplation and action may be more nearly and straitly conjoined and united together than they have been. . . . Howbeit I do not mean, when I speak of use and action, that end before-mentioned of the applying of knowledge to lucre and profession. . . . But as both heaven and earth do conspire and contribute to the use and benefit of man, so the end ought to be from both philosophies [*i.e.* the theoretical and the practical] to separate and reject vain speculations and whatsoever is empty and void, and to preserve and augment whatsoever is solid and fruitful; that knowledge may not be as a courtesan, for pleasure and vanity only, or as a bond-woman, to acquire and gain to her master's use; but as a spouse, for generation, fruit, and comfort."

The grounds of Bacon's great rupture with the schools are now sufficiently apparent. The spirit of dogmatism, the neglect of nature, false modes of procedure, and the separation of knowledge from human

life had combined to deaden the mind and to bring learning to a standstill. The history of philosophy therefore exhibited only a succession of autocratic teachers and docile hearers passing on cut-and-dry tradition from generation to generation; while it ought to show a long line of inventors and discoverers, each adding something new and important to the inventions and discoveries of those who had gone before. Fired by the splendid ambition of making knowledge at once more progressive and more practical, Bacon set out to indicate his new instrument in science. That instrument, which is explained in detail in the "Novum Organum," is defined by the word induction.

The method which had prevailed among the scholastic philosophers was the deductive method, or a priorism, in its most vicious form. In conducting their inquiries they habitually began at the wrong end, first assuming general principles, and then explaining or misexplaining particulars by them; while "if ever they summoned experience, it was not to consult her as an adviser, but to drag her at their chariot wheels as a captive." Truth was thus pursued from within outward. "All who before ourselves have applied themselves to the discovery of the arts," writes Bacon, "after having only for a little while turned their eyes upon things and instances and experience, then straightway, as if invention were nothing more than a certain process of excogitation, have fallen, as it were, to invoke their own spirits to utter oracles to them." They had started with inherited formulas gathered from the teachings of former dogmatists, or preconceived notions evolved from their inner sense of what ought to be, and had proceeded first to deduce all knowledge from them and then to work it up into elaborate systems of philosophy. The result was the multiplication of what Bacon

happily called "sciences as one would." Metaphysical conceptions were thus made the starting-point of even physical inquiries, and the phenomena of nature had to be manipulated to quadrate with given theories. Men did not first look at facts and then seek the explanation of them; they began with ready-made explanations which they imposed upon the facts. "As late as the Copernican system it was urged, as an argument in favour of the true theory of the solar system, that it placed the fire, the noblest element, in the centre of the universe. This was a remnant of the notion that the order of the universe must be perfect, and that perfection consisted in conformity to rules, either real or conventional. Again, reverting to numbers, certain numbers were *perfect,* therefore these numbers must obtain in the phenomena of nature. Six was a perfect number—that is, equal to the sum of all its factors—an additional reason why there must be exactly six planets. The Pythagoreans, on the other hand, attributed perfection to the number ten, but agreed in thinking that the perfect numbers must somehow be realised in the heavens; and knowing only of nine heavenly bodies to make up the enumeration, they asserted 'that there was an *antichthon,* or counter-earth, on the other side of the sun, invisible to us.' Even Huygens was persuaded that when the number of the heavenly bodies had reached twelve it could not admit of any further increase. Creative power could not go beyond that sacred number."* It comes to something when you have to invent a world to support a theory! An arbitrary symmetry was sought at all costs; as when, for instance, it was laid down that one measure of the earth is transmutable into ten of water, and one of water into ten of air.

* Mill, "Logic." Book V., chap. v., 6.

The consequences of such obsessions were sometimes very remarkable. Thus Aristotle had maintained that, as all perfect motion is circular motion, therefore the motions of the heavenly bodies must be circular. Kepler accepted this abstract idea, which proved, as he afterwards confessed, a "fatal thief" of his time, since it long stood between him and his great discovery that the planetary motions are not circular but elliptical. "True philosophy," said Bacon, "is that which is the faithful echo of the voice of the world, which is written in some sort under the direction of things, which adds nothing of itself, which is only the rebound, the reflection, of reality." How was such true philosophy possible while the deductive method remained unchallenged?

Bacon, on the contrary, proclaimed that the beginning of all knowledge is the patient, direct, first-hand, impartial cross-examination of nature. "Man, being the servant and interpreter of nature, can do and understand so much and so much only as he has observed in fact or in thought of the course of nature; beyond this, he neither knows anything nor can do anything." At the touch of this aphorism the pretentious subjective systems of the schools go down like so many houses of cards.

Our first business, then, according to this new teaching, is to set aside authority, abandon all a priori reasonings, and go straight for ourselves to the great world of fact; our business throughout is to seek to discover there—not what other people have told us that we must find, nor what our preconceived ideas suggest that we ought to find—but simply what actually is. Bacon's method is not mere empiricism—the resting satisfied with isolated facts; for this he classes among the false methods of philosophy. Nor does he inculcate hasty generalisation, or the rushing from a few scattered

observations to vast theories about man and nature. Induction, as taught by Bacon, means the accumulation of multitudes of facts followed by long and laborious examination of such facts in search of the large general underlying truths which these will ultimately be found to disclose. Knowledge and truth, therefore, are not to be derived from authority or from ourselves. They must be built up gradually by thought out of the materials furnished by experience and observation.

Manifestly, then, the Baconian methodology was fatal to the dogmatism of the schools and to the worship of authority upon which it has rested. This defines his significance in the movements of the Renaissance, and, more broadly, his place in the history of thought. It is true that when looked at closely he reveals many limitations. There is little or no content to his philosophy. His own contributions to positive knowledge were few and slight. He really lagged behind the science of his day instead of leading it; for he knew nothing, for example, about Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, and rejected the Copernican astronomy. His encyclopædic ambitions—and he himself declared that he had "taken all knowledge" as "his province"—savour far more of outgoing scholasticism than of incoming science. It is further to be remembered that he was by no means the first to realise the meaning of induction or to proclaim its importance. Yet, all qualifications made, he holds his position secure. If he was, as he said, "but a trumpeter, not a combatant," he at least "rang the bell which called the other wits together." By "sowing in the meantime the seeds of a purer truth," he certainly did perform, as he claimed, his part "towards the commencement of the great undertaking" which others were to carry forward —"the legitimate interpretation of nature." He was the

first powerful and influential advocate and exponent of the particular method which is now justly called by his name; and though we now see that he made a mistake in attempting entirely to eliminate from scientific inquiry imagination and all the processes of deduction, his effort was wholly on the right side. He helped, as we have said, to break down the tyranny of dogma and to put men once more in fruitful relations with nature and reality; and for this reason he stands out, a figure of immense importance, in the history of the great transition from the mediæval to the modern world.

CHAPTER VI

The Renaissance in Education

I.—THE CHIEF FORCES AT WORK

THE period of the Renaissance was prolific in educational theories and experiments. These were a natural result of its intense self-consciousness, its ever-widening conception of life's possibilities, and its almost superstitious faith in knowledge, and they demand the consideration of the student who is otherwise little interested in pedagogy because they are so clearly expressive of the spirit of the age. In such efforts towards the shaping of the characters and destinies of the rising generation we have a striking concrete illustration of the practical application of the new ideas to life.

Higher education during the middle ages was, of course, in the hands of the clergy, in whose schools the curriculum was based upon the Seven Liberal Arts, identified, after the mystical habit of the time, with the seven pillars of the Temple of Wisdom. These were divided into two groups: the *trivium*, which represented the literary side of what was then understood as culture; and the *quadrivium*, which embraced the sciences. The following mnemonic distich tabulates these seven arts and indicates their scope:—

Gramm. loquitur, *Dia.* vera docet, *Rhe.* verba colorat,
Mus. canet, *Ar.* numerat, *Geo.* ponderat, *As.* colit astra.

The scheme thus comprised grammar, dialectic or logic, rhetoric, music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. Grammar, of course, meant Latin; dialectic was scholastic logic in its most barren form, a thing of arid terminologies well calculated to sharpen the wits and foster the current mania for verbal subtleties and disputations; rhetoric was based mainly on Quintilian and Cicero as interpreted by Bede and Alcuin; music was cultivated in the interest of the services of the church; arithmetic was much taken up with fanciful speculations on the secret properties and occult significance of numbers; geometry also included such geography as was then known; astronomy was little more than astrology. Such were the seven provinces into which the mediæval pedagogues had mapped out the entire field of learning. It was the business of the would-be scholar to explore them thoroughly. This task accomplished, he was master of all the knowledge of his time.

Parallel with this scheme of education, which was devised primarily for the "clerk," was the curriculum of the castle school, the aim of which was to fashion "a very perfect gentle knight." This, too, had its Seven Liberal Arts, but they differed fundamentally from those just enumerated, for they were riding, shooting with the bow and arrow, hawking, swimming, boxing, chess-playing, and the writing of poetry. It is important to note here the sharp distinction which was thus made between the intellectual and the active—between learning and life; for it was one result of that general dualism in mediæval thought which found its most obvious illustration in the almost complete separation of the spheres of the sacred and the secular. The clerk or scholar was isolated; his concern was scholarship; and for him the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* had accordingly been provided. The knight or "gentle-

man," on the other hand, had no need of such mental cultivation, and, it was assumed, no interest in it. For him, the foundations of education were laid in physical accomplishments, though to these were added such social arts and graces as befitted his rank and, in an age of romantic sex-worship, would assure his success with women.

The transformation of the conception of the "gentleman" which took place at Henry VIII.'s court under the influence of spreading humanistic ideas has already been noted. I recall it here because it serves to introduce the general subject of the new tendencies in education which began with the Renaissance. Behind all these we can, of course, detect the workings of a desire to escape from the narrowness and sterility of the mediæval ideas and methods, and to make education correspond more completely with the widening views of life. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that the educational reformers of the new age were all governed by the same principles or set out to achieve the same objects. They differed much in aim and spirit, and in their differences we can easily detect the domination now of one and now of another of the great influences which combined in the movement of the Renaissance as a whole.

Three main streams may thus be followed in the pedagogical speculations and experiments of the time. The first took its rise in the revival of learning. This humanistic education was based almost exclusively on the Greek and Latin classics; it was linguistic in character, and went little farther than a study of form and style; its underlying conception was also aristocratic, learning being treated as the privilege of the favoured few. Meanwhile, in the second place, education developed under the powerful influence of the religious

revival upon somewhat different lines. In their work for education the great religious reformers and their followers were at once more practical and more democratic than the pure humanists. Education was conceived more clearly as a preparation for living and as a social need. Here and there among these religious educationists there were extremists who deprecated classic culture altogether. But for the most part the religious reformers were humanists, though with qualifications; they regarded classical culture as good, and made linguistic knowledge the basis of their programmes; but such culture and knowledge were held to be strictly subordinate to the great purposes of education—religious and moral training and social utility. Finally, apart from both the humanistic and the religious idea of education, there was that conception of it which arose, far more slowly, out of the new scientific thought of the day. This third conception is called by pedagogical writers the "realistic."

II.—THE EDUCATIONAL IDEALS OF THE HUMANISTS AND THE RELIGIOUS REFORMERS

In the educational developments in Italy during the period of the Renaissance the humanistic ideal naturally prevailed. It is, indeed, true that the desire for versatility and the craving for self-expansion which were among the characteristics of the time led theorists and practical schoolmasters alike to crowd as many subjects as possible into their schemes of study, and that the great exponents of the new spirit were as eager about Christian training as they were about classical culture. Yet it was upon such classical culture that they came more and more to depend. "Without literature," wrote Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (afterwards Pope Pius II.)

to his nephew, "I do not know what you can be but a two-legged donkey. No one, neither nobleman, nor king, nor general is of any worth if he be ignorant of literature." This was the master-thought with the later Italian pedagogues. Literature—and this, of course, meant Greek and Latin—was conceived as the one great instrument for the building of character no less than for the training of taste.

Italian humanistic education may, of course, be studied in many treatises, such, for example, as those of Aeneas Sylvius and Maffeo Vegeo. But if we would realise what it was at its best, we may more profitably turn to the practical work of the greatest of the Italian schoolmasters of the time—Vittorino da Feltre (1378-1446), whose school at Mantua has been described by an expert as "the typical school of the Humanities."* Vittorino's object was to make education a process of pleasure to the learners; to develop the entire nature, physical as well as intellectual and moral; to bring out all the qualities of character in such wise that the scholar, whatever might be his after course in life, might be fully equipped to play his part privately as a good man, and publicly as a good citizen. Latin studies formed the foundation of his system; some Greek was afterwards introduced; music and the rudiments of what we should call the natural sciences had also a place in his scheme. Prominence was likewise given to games and physical exercise, in which the master himself, a little man of wiry frame and untiring energy, took his part along with the boys. That Vittorino's purpose was to realise the Hellenic ideal of a fully rounded, harmoniously developed character is evident. But no suggestions of neo-paganism are apparent in his work. Himself an orthodox and devout Christian,

* Woodward, "Vittorino da Feltre," p. 24.

he strove rather to blend Christianity with his humanistic teaching. Yet at the same time he was wholly free from ecclesiastical bias and all the influence of asceticism; and the spirit of his labours was that not of the cloister but of the world.

The name of another Italian schoolmaster, Guarino da Verona (1370-1460) is closely associated with that of Vittorino, and he deserves passing mention here because, while contemporary with the Mantuan teacher, he really represents a later stage in the evolution of humanistic ideals in pedagogy. From an account of his work transmitted by his son, it is clear that it marks the encroachment of those pedantic elements which were later to gain complete ascendancy. Far more than Vittorino he thought of scholarship as something to be cultivated for its own sake, and with little or no idea of its relationship with life; and with him, far more than with Vittorino, scholarship resolved itself into knowledge of the Greek and Latin writers.

The great representative of humanistic education in Germany was Johann Sturm (1507-89), under whose direction the Gymnasium at Strassburg was for many years the leading institution of the kind in northern Europe. The framework of his system was classical in the narrowest sense of the term; Latin supplanted the mother-tongue entirely; the seven years which the boy spent in the Gymnasium were devoted almost exclusively to its mastery; and when later he went to the Academy and the University, his attention was mainly confined to logic, rhetoric, and oratory. The influence of Sturm throughout northern Europe was very powerful and very pernicious, for it was he more than any other man who, as the German scholar Helwig put it, brought education "into bondage to Latin." Yet it is

significant that he himself regarded his absurd curriculum as the best practical means of making boys into God-fearing and useful men, and that all his dry-as-dust methods were controlled by a pronounced moral and religious spirit. *Pietas literata* was his favourite phrase; and this sums up pretty clearly the twofold purpose which he sought to achieve.

Elsewhere among the German educationists the influence of the prevailing spirit of religious and social reform was even more manifest. Luther's conception of education was boldly democratic. In his famous appeal to the burgomasters and councillors of the German cities, he maintained that education should be popular, that it should be free, and that it should be compulsory. In the great school system which he outlined, ample provision was made for all ranks and classes—rich and poor, high and low, girls as well as boys. Every child throughout the land was to be taught at least to read, write, and cipher; even when, owing to the poverty of the parents, children were bound to work for wages, still, arrangements were to be made to enable them to receive a minimum of two hours' daily instruction in letters, morals, and religion; this system was designed to embrace even the smallest villages; and such methods of teaching were to be adopted as would attract instead of repel the pupil. Neither Luther himself, nor his chief lieutenant, Melanchthon, whose direct influence on German education was very much greater than his own, had any quarrel with humanism. But with both mere scholastic culture was a secondary consideration; with both the ideas always uppermost were the religious and social sides of education and its bearings upon life. It was so again with Wimpheling, whose foundation principle was, indeed, that the education of the young was the

only secure basis of effective reform in home, in church, in state. "Of what use are all the books in the world," Wimpheling characteristically asks, "the most learned writings, the most profound research, if they minister only to the vainglory of their authors and do not, or cannot, advance the good of mankind?" Such a question is sufficient to mark the rupture in educational ideals between the German reformers and the pure humanists who followed Guarino in Italy. Yet even in Germany the Latin tradition remained powerful. The school of Wolfgang Ratke, or Ratichius (1571-1635), at Koethen, was the first German institution in which children were systematically taught their own language.

In England the new education followed on the whole the German lines, classical culture forming the groundwork of study, while the spirit of the Reformation made itself felt in the emphasis which was at the same time thrown upon the religious aspects of the child's training. This is shown, for example, in the very first work in English in which the problems of moral philosophy were attacked—"The Boke named the Governour," published in 1531 by More's friend, Sir Thomas Elyot. Written at a time when, as the author notes, it was still a reproach to a gentleman to care for anything except field sports and the chase, its principal aim was "to instruct men in such vertues as shall be expedient for them which shall have authoritie in a weale publike." The treatise is far more comprehensive than this programme would lead one to expect, for it deals, among other matters, with exercises and dancing (an art which was much in vogue at the court of Henry VIII.). But the practical moral purpose is kept in view throughout. In regard to the curriculum itself, Elyot's great theme is the early mastery of Latin as a familiar and colloquial

language. Latin should be, in fact, the child's mother tongue; and even his nurses and servants, therefore, should be able to speak to him in a diction of Ciceronian elegance and purity. Classical studies again constitute the backbone of the system elaborated by Ascham in his "Scholemaster" (published in 1570, two years after the writer's death). Essentially a religious moralist, Ascham indeed makes virtue and efficiency the great end of all education, but drill in the classical languages and a knowledge of their literatures is the only means to that end. Such, broadly speaking, was the conception which prevailed in English Renaissance education in general. In theory, moral development was held to be its main object; in practice, everything was sacrificed to proficiency in Latin and, where Greek was added, in Greek. In particular, absolutely no provision was made for the study of English. At the Grammar School at Stratford-on-Avon—a representative school of its kind—Shakespeare never received a single lesson in the use of his mother tongue. Such neglect of one of the most vital aspects of education as a training for life furnishes a glaring illustration of the superstitious veneration for classical antiquity bred by the humanistic enthusiasm of the age. It is, however, only fair to the memory of the greatest of the English schoolmasters of the time, Richard Mulcaster, to add that in this and sundry other respects he was much in advance of the average pedagogy of his contemporaries. On the ground that we should "care for that most which we ever use the most, because we use it most," he boldly claimed recognition for English studies, and even went so far as to declare that as he loved London better than Rome, and England better than Italy, so he loved English better than Latin.

On the whole, as will now be seen, the influence of

humanism on education was distinctly unsatisfactory. The ideal of culture which it set up was in its own way quite as narrow and lifeless as that which it displaced. In fact, it was, in one sense, even narrower and more lifeless; for, as a modern historian of education has pointed out, the effect of the Renaissance was to neglect the *quadrivium*, the subjects of which were, roughly speaking, scientific, and to concentrate attention upon the *trivium*, the subjects of which were purely formal.* The genius of the new age had promised to lead men out of the cloister into the world. In the end it led them only out of the cloister into the classroom. Pedantry resumed its sway under a changed form, and the present went back into bondage to the past. Even the word "humanities" soon lost its large and generous original meaning, and shrank into a synonym for Greek and Latin learning. These two dead languages and their literatures became the sole instruments of culture, and the classical scholar was accepted as the only possible type of the educated man. It is necessary to lay stress upon these absurd Renaissance ideas because their evil influence was destined to be far-reaching and long-enduring, and to continue indeed right down into our own modern world. It was not, in fact, till about the middle of the nineteenth century that a resolute attempt was made to emancipate our English public schools and universities from the despotism of the traditions initiated by the revival of learning, and to bring them in some measure at least into line with the living interests of actual life. Even to-day the exaggerated importance which in academic circles is still attached to classical acquirements shows that the old superstition has not by any means been outgrown.

* Quick, "Educational Reformers," p. 65.

III.—THE INFLUENCE OF SCIENCE ON EDUCATION

The bookishness and pedantry of humanistic education did not, however, go unchallenged. A healthy protest was made against them during the seventeenth century by the first practical representatives of the "realistic" school. Their efforts are important to us here because they are directly connected with another side of the movement of the Renaissance—the scientific side. The chief influence behind them was the Baconian philosophy.

A German schoolmaster who has already been named—Wolfgang Ratke—may perhaps be placed in the van of the innovators along these new lines. Very probably during a visit to England—at any rate, somewhere and at some time—he became acquainted with Bacon's writings, and it was from these that he derived some of his central principles, among them his great maxim: *Per inductionem et experimentum omnia*—all things by means of induction and experiment. In accordance with this conception he set aside authority, abandoned the practice of making the pupil learn by rote, proceeded in every subject from the concrete to the abstract, and in the teaching of languages started with the much-neglected mother tongue, through the medium of which all other linguistic knowledge was to be attained. In practice, Ratke was a failure; but a certain historical interest still pertains to his theories.

Far more important, however, both in itself and in its historical significance, is the work of the Moravian educationalist, John Amos Kominski, or Comenius (1592-1671), who may justly be regarded as the first of the great practical realists. In him we have an avowed disciple of Bacon. Thus in the preface to his

"Physics," he writes of the "Instauratio Magna" as "a wonderful work, which I consider the most instructive philosophical work of the century now beginning," though he confessed himself "troubled because the noble Verulam, while giving the true key to Nature, did not unlock her secrets, but only showed, by a few examples, how they should be unlocked, and left the rest to future observations to be extended through centuries." Again, when in 1641, at the invitation of the Long Parliament, he visited England to discuss plans for a practical demonstration of his principles—plans which the unsettled state of the country compelled him to abandon—the Baconian ideas were still uppermost in his mind: "There was even named for the purpose," he writes, "the Savoy in London, Winchester College also, out of London, was named; and again, nearer the city, Chelsea College . . . so that nothing seemed more certain than that the design of the great Verulam of a universal college of all nations devoted to the advancement of the sciences would be carried out."

The direct indebtedness of Comenius to his great English master is specially conspicuous in two ways: first, in his adoption of the inductive method in teaching; and, secondly, in his belief in the possibility of co-ordinating all knowledge into a complete corpus—*Pansophia,* as he called it. The work of education, he argues, must accommodate itself to the *modus operandi* of nature—a declaration which is interesting, notwithstanding the fantastic extremes into which the writer himself was beguiled by it; and we must in consequence proceed everywhere and at all times from the simple to the complex, from the concrete to the abstract, from details to rules and principles, from particulars to generals. In methodology, therefore, he merely sought

to apply the Baconian aphorisms to the problems of education. Bacon's influence on his general conception of man and knowledge is equally obvious. His master's grandiose dream of the complete conquest of nature is reproduced in the encyclopædic programme set out in the "Schola Pansophica," or "School of Universal Knowledge." "There is nothing in Heaven or Earth or in the Waters, nothing in the Abyss under the Earth, nothing in the Human Body, nothing in the Soul, nothing in Holy Writ, nothing in the Arts, nothing in Economy, nothing in Polity, nothing in the Church of which the little candidates for wisdom shall be wholly ignorant." Following Bacon, he also repudiates the despotism of the past, and declares it to be both the right and the duty of the modern man to examine and interpret facts for himself. "Are not we as well as the old philosophers placed in Nature's garden? Why then should we not cast about our eyes, nostrils and ears as well as they? Why should we learn the works of Nature from any other master than those of our senses? Why do we not, I say, turn over the living book of the world instead of dead papers? In it we may contemplate more things, and with greater delight and profit, than anyone can tell us. If we have anywhere need of an interpreter, the Maker of Nature is the best interpreter Himself." * In such a passage the Baconian inspiration is obvious.

At the root of Comenius's pedagogical philosophy lies the principle that it is the business of education to improve the faculties with which man is endowed by nature in order that he may grow up with a full knowledge of himself and of the world. His theory was broadly democratic. "Not only," he writes in his

* Preface to "Natural Philosophie Reformed" (English translation, 1651).

"Didactica," "are the children of the rich and noble to be drawn to school, but all alike, gentle and simple, rich and poor, boys and girls, in great towns and small, down to the country villages. For this reason. Everyone who is born a human being is born to this intent: that he should be a human being, that is, a reasonable creature, ruling over the other creatures, and bearing the likeness of his Maker." At the same time, as a theologian, he looked at education entirely from the religious point of view. This present life is only a preparation for eternity; education should aid in the preparation. The activities which education fits men to carry on themselves gain all their value from their religious significance. On the whole, he was markedly anti-humanistic in spirit. Latin was essential as the universal means of inter-communication among peoples of different tongues and of the dissemination of religious and moral truth, and the utility of classical studies was therefore asserted by him. None the less, he distrusted classical literature, which he considered to be unfit for the training of Christians. This feeling carried him so far that he even wrote a set of Latin manuals himself to take the place of the writings which were commonly studied in the schools. For the beauty of form and style he had no sense whatever. His standard was wholly practical. "All authors," he ruled, "are to be banished from the schools except those that give knowledge of useful things." If this declaration may now seem to savour too much of Gradgrindism, it is none the less interesting, because, conjointly with his other theories, it marks Comenius's opposition to the dominant humanistic ideal in education.

IV.—THE EDUCATIONAL THEORIES OF RABELAIS AND MONTAIGNE

I reserve for separate treatment the pedagogical ideas of two great French thinkers, whose views were so independent that they defy formal classification—Rabelais and Montaigne. Both these men wrote as non-professionals, and, as a result, they often failed to see things from the actual teacher's point of view. By reason of their originality, their sagacity, and the breadth of their outlook, they are none the less entitled to rank among the most important educational reformers of the sixteenth century.

Rabelais' ideas about education are set forth episodically in that amazing farrago of wild buffoonery and profound philosophy which contains the histories of Gargantua and Pantagruel. Their keynote—which is, in fact, the keynote of all Rabelais' thought—is antagonism to everything belonging to the cloister and what the cloister had stood for and symbolised: to asceticism and the repression of life's healthy, natural instincts; to dogmatic theology and servile obedience; to scholasticism with all its barrenness and futility. The purpose of education as conceived by him is to fashion, not the scholar, but the man; to bring out all the faculties in harmonious and well-balanced development; to prepare for life in the widest possible acceptation of the term. The absurdities of the old methods are satirised in the account of Gargantua's early training; he is entrusted, to begin with, to "a great Doctor of Theology, called Master Tubal Holofernes," who spends five years and three months in teaching him to say his A B C by heart backwards; after which many more long years are consumed in the acquisition of much useless information according to the laborious

routine still in vogue. The result is that the pupil "did profit nothing, but, which is worse, grew thereby foolish, simple, doted, and blockish." Upon this, for the sake of contrast, we are introduced to a typical product of the new and rational methods advocated by Rabelais—a young page, Eudemon, who is a model of physical health and comeliness, virtue, good breeding, grace, and sound scholarship. Panocrates, the tutor of Eudemon, now takes Gargantua in hand, and forthwith everything is changed. The curriculum adopted is then given in detail, and from this we learn the principles which Rabelais was anxious to enforce. From four o'clock, the time of rising, to the hour of repose, not a moment of the day is wasted, the ordinary experiences of life, and even recreation, being turned to educational account. Instruction through books, to which some six hours a day are devoted, of course occupies the most prominent place in Rabelais' scheme. But the stress is now thrown upon substance rather than upon form; while, though Gargantua learns a great deal by heart, his lessons are not allowed to remain things of rote only, but are practically applied and brought to the test of common fact. Thus, as the boy and his tutor sit together over their meals, they often speak "of the virtue, property, efficacy, and nature of all that was served on the table," recalling whatever had been written upon these subjects by the wise men of antiquity. Conversation, in which the student's mind is drawn out and exercised, and observation of the things about him, are thus made to supplement book learning and repetition. Natural phenomena are likewise studied directly whenever opportunity arises; in every country walk, for example, Gargantua is encouraged to examine trees and plants, to compare his own observations of them with those recorded in books, and to carry home

specimens for future use, while the face of the sky by day and night is the subject of regular scrutiny. In this insistence upon the training of the senses, and upon the great principle of learning about things, not at second hand through books, but at first hand through direct contact with the things themselves, Rabelais appears to have been years in advance of the pedagogical theorists of his time. The arts of life, and particularly music, are similarly encouraged, while with the object of producing, not a mere monster of erudition, but a healthy mind in a healthy body, the utmost attention is paid to all kinds of physical exercise which are calculated to develop strength, agility and self-control. On this side, too, Rabelais' sound sense is apparent; for while much of Gargantua's time is taken up with horsemanship and feats of arms, and whatever else specially belongs to the equipment of the "gentleman," he is also initiated into the mysteries of workshop and factory, and taught corn threshing, wood carving, and painting. This recognition of the place of the handicrafts in education is certainly remarkable. Religion, too, is amply provided for. The day begins with the reading of Scripture and prayer; thanks to God for His "Divine bounty and munificence" follow every meal; and at night the tutor and the boy together offer praise to God "for the time that is past," and "recommend themselves to His Divine clemency for all the future." But it is noteworthy that religious instruction is limited to the exposition of the Bible, and that no time is wasted on barren theological disputations according to the methods of the older schools.

No account of Rabelais' educational ideas would be complete without some reference to his wonderful utopian dream of the Abbey of Thelema. "If," said Friar John on one occasion to the great king Gargantua,

"you think that I have done you, or may hereafter do you any acceptable service, then give me leave to form an abbey after mine own mind and fancy." Permission granted, the Friar told the King that the groundwork of his enterprise was to be simple; he proposed that his new institution should be in every respect the opposite of every such institution the world had ever seen. Life in the abbey was to have nothing ascetic, morbid or unnatural about it; it was to be lived in the open-air—a life at once free, clean, and debonair. Over the great gate a long inscription set forth the class of people —such as bigots, hypocrites, pharisees, gold graspers, the cruel, the contentious, the dissolute—whose society was not desired, while a warm invitation to fellowship was extended to men and women alike, whose hearts were pure and modest and whose religion was rooted fast in simple faith and charity. The abbey grounds were miracles of ordered loveliness; there were tilting yards and tennis courts, gardens and theatres, and riverside walks for exercise and recreation; for study there were libraries stored with all the treasures of learning, and museums rich with the spoils of the world. The monks and nuns of other religious orders had wilfully neglected personal cleanliness and comeliness. Among the Thelemites, on the contrary, the strictest attention was paid, not to hygiene only, but also to every detail of raiment, manner and bearing, which would minister to bodily beauty and social charm. No clock or sundial was to be found throughout the whole institution, for "the greatest waste of time is to sit and count the hours"; no artificial vows of chastity, poverty and obedience were imposed, for each inmate was allowed to follow that course of study and of life which suited best his disposition, talents and aims. In other monastic orders, personality had been crushed beneath

the burden of multitudinous statutes and regulations. In the rule of Thelema there was only one clause: *Fay ce que voudras*—"Do what you will"; and this was enough, since the man or woman whose nature is attuned to the moral law may be trusted always to do spontaneously that which is right. In this atmosphere of wholesome freedom the youths and maidens of the new order dwelt together in mutual reverence and sympathy, not filling their minds with the morbid fancies and unclean images which were too often bred in the unnatural seclusion of the cloister, but rather learning through their daily relationships the supreme lessons of sanity, reciprocal respect and self-restraint. Then, when, says Rabelais, carrying still further his hostility to the celibacy of the so-called religious life, "the time came that any man of the said abbey . . . had a mind to go out of it, he carried along with him one of the ladies—namely, her whom he had before that chosen, and they were married together. And if they had formerly in Thelema lived in good devotion and amity, they did continue therein and increase it to a greater height in their state of matrimony, and did entertain that mutual love till the very last day of their life, in no less fervency than at the very day of their wedding."

The Abbey of Thelema is only an incident in the chronicle of Gargantua's prodigious adventures; it occupies a few pages only; then it is dismissed, and we never hear of it again. Yet, of all the many visions of an age which loved to indulge in such utopian fantasies, this seems to me by far at once the wisest and most engaging.

Rabelais was a dreamer, whose powerful imagination perpetually ran away with him. His great successor, Montaigne the Sceptic, on the other hand, brought an almost unrivalled sagacity to bear upon every subject

he touched, and never for a moment forgot the narrow limitations of the real and the possible. While Rabelais, therefore, had written about education with little thought of the immediate application of his theories, Montaigne kept a definite practical end steadily in view.

At the same time he is in many ways more radical than Rabelais, particularly in his entire repudiation of the Renaissance superstition, to which the older writer had clung, that knowledge is the main thing in life and is of value for its own sake.* Montaigne is generously utilitarian. Education is entirely for life, and unless increasing knowledge brings with it also increase of wisdom, it is only so much useless baggage. "Except our mind be the better and our judgment the sounder" for what we learn, "I had rather my scholar had employed his time in playing tennis." That a man should learn to know himself and to live well and to die well—that is his conception of the end of all education worthy of the name. As Michelet has pointed out, he was the first writer on the subject to turn the teacher's attention from the thing to be learned to the learner—from the matter of scholarship to the personality of the pupil. Mere knowledge—what he calls *pédantisme*, the sort of knowledge which is accumulated out of books—he despises and ridicules. He praises Sparta at the expense of Athens, for in Athens the boys were taught only to speak well, while the Spartans cared nothing for literature, but everything for life and conduct. He regrets the immense amount of time which is wasted in learning words and the trick of putting

* Montaigne's ideas about education may be gathered from the essay "Of the Institution and Education of Children" (I. xxv.), and incidentally from those "Of Pedantry" (I. xxiv.), "Of Books" (II. x.), "Of Anger" (II. xxxi.), and "Of the Affections of Fathers to their Children" (II. viii.); though much else to the point will be found scattered, in accordance with the writer's discursive habit, through other essays.

them into sentences; "let us leave such things to those whose profession it is to do nothing else." Real education should give wisdom in enterprise, integrity in action, modesty in gesture, justice in conduct, judgment and grace in speech, courage in sickness, moderation in sport, temperance in pleasure, order and government in the house; and one who is thus disciplined for right living, and none other, is the truly educated man. "We are ever ready to ask—hath such a one any skill in the Greek or Latin tongue? Can he write well in prose, in verse? But whether he be grown better or wiser—which should be the chiefest drift—that is never spoken of." To write pure Latin is good, but the principal consideration is not that a boy shall write pure Latin, but that he shall develop into a wise and useful man.

Such being Montaigne's conception of the business of education, it is easy to understand his pronounced antagonism to the bookishness which, as we have seen, was a common feature in the pedagogical theory and practice of his time. "We toil only to stuff the memory, and leave the conscience and the intelligence void." Far more than any other contemporary writer on education he realises the importance of cultivating the child's independence of judgment and individuality. He is impatient of book learning—"to know by rote is not to know." Dogmatic authority is an evil; all dependence upon other people's ideas must be deprecated. "I would have him [the teacher] make his scholar sift all things, and harbour nothing in his head by mere authority and upon trust." Again: "We talk and prate—Cicero saith thus: these are the very words of Plato or Aristotle. But what say *we?* A parrot would say as much." And once more: "Suppose we may become learned with other men's learning.

I am still sure that we can never be wise but by our own wisdom." The pupil, therefore, must assimilate the knowledge which he obtains through his books. "It is not enough to join learning and knowledge to the mind. They should be incorporated into it."

That Montaigne, with his eyes fixed upon complete living, should attach much importance to physical culture is, of course, only what we might expect: "It is not a body, it is not a mind, that we erect, but it is a man, and we must not make two parts of him." In this matter, however, he was only at one with Renaissance educational theories in general. The point rather to emphasise about his own doctrines, therefore, is his protest against both the principles and the methods of those ordinary schoolmasters who first mistake knowledge for development, and then seek even to inculcate knowledge in a way which fails altogether to strengthen and enrich the pupil's mind. Rabelais had made training rather than instruction the end and test of education, and had thus sought to break down the pedagogical tradition of the pure humanists. Montaigne saw even more clearly the full significance of that fruitful thought, and alike by his stress upon it, and by his repeated assertion of the claim of individuality against authority and of the present against the past, he placed himself in the forefront of the progressive movements of his age.

CHAPTER VII

The Renaissance in Art

I.—PRELIMINARIES OF THE REVIVAL OF ART

We have now to follow the movement of the Renaissance in the field of art. The subject is a vast and intricate one, and while, on the one hand, there is danger lest condensed treatment of it may result in a mere catalogue of names, on the other hand it is certain that if we permitted ourselves to be tempted into details either of a personal or of a technical character, this chapter would soon swell into a volume. Ours, therefore, must be the middle course of the general historical student who, ignoring all questions of method and the inter-relations of masters and schools, and regarding the art of the Renaissance as one aspect only of the Renaissance as a whole, seeks to understand how it was shaped and coloured by the diverse influences of the time.

Our point of view thus defined, the lines of our inquiry may be laid down in advance, since the transformation we have noted in other spheres of activity will again become manifest here. We shall find art emancipating itself from sacerdotalism and the control of the Church, ceasing gradually to be a mere vehicle for theological dogma, and allying itself with the interests of the secular life. We shall find that this secularisation is accompanied by a return to nature and reality. At the same time we shall find that art reveals in many ways the profound influence of the classic

revival, and becomes one of the numerous channels through which the spirit of humanism is expressed. If these points can be made clear, the purpose of the present chapter will be accomplished.

It is necessary, first, to indicate broadly the course of art from the opening of the Christian era down to the time when it began to respond to the spirit of the new age.

A marked feature of the art of primitive Christian days, as this is preserved in the sepulchral decorations of the Roman catacombs, is the continuation of the classic tradition. This is shown not only in the floral and mythological motives which were still freely employed, but even more conspicuously in the delineation of sacred subjects and persons, in which—as in the famous case of Christ as the Good Shepherd (a figure obviously derived from Pan)—the Christian painter or sculptor evidently adopted without scruple the formulas which he found ready to his hand.* Christian art at this stage of its evolution exhibited originality only in the development of a number of characteristic emblems —such as the Vine, the Fish and the Lamb—which gradually came to be accounted as part of a regular pictorial language for the conveyance of religious ideas. Then, when little by little increasing place was given to incidents from the Old and New Testaments, these were treated, not for their interest as incidents, but wholly for their didactic value or symbolical significance —a fact which explains why a few subjects only were picked out to the exclusion of many others having

* In the catacombs the Good Shepherd appears in Roman costume, holding the pipes of his pagan prototype. It is interesting at this point to recall Milton's identification of Christ with Pan in his "Ode on the Nativity." Another noteworthy appropriation was that of Orpheus, who occasionally takes the place of Pan as a type of Christ.

greater artistic possibilities, and why the subjects so chosen were repeated again and again with comparatively slight variation in the manner of their presentation. A tendency towards the entire subordination of form to content is thus already apparent. Even more important, however, in view of later changes, is the spirit of this early Christian art, which is singularly tender and humane. All the harsher and sterner aspects of the new faith were, it would seem, studiously avoided. The favourite figure of Christ was that of the Good Shepherd, just referred to, and in this form He is often represented as bearing a lamb, or sometimes a kid, on His shoulders; but He is nowhere depicted dividing the sheep from the goats till the fourth century. No delineations were introduced either in painting or in sculpture of the Day of Judgment or the fate of the lost, and no instance has been brought to light in which the artist assumed the rôle of the prophet and proclaimed the vengeance to come. Nor is this quite all. These early artists also reveal a striking unwillingness to deal with the humiliation and sufferings of the Redeemer, whom they choose rather to think of in His hour of heavenly triumph. From all the horrors of the story of His last days on earth they avert their eyes. At the outset, even the cross itself is entirely absent from their work, and when it first appears it is as a cross only, its floral decorations attesting that it was meant as a symbol, not of suffering, but of victory. So far as is known, no scene from the Passion or Crucifixion appears before the fifth century, and these topics did not begin to be popular till something like a hundred years later. The contrast in purpose and temper thus suggested between early Christian art and the ecclesiastical and dogmatic art of the middle ages is very noteworthy.

The radical changes which came over Christianity from the time of its triumph under Constantine onward were, of course, productive of various changes in its art. Along with many of the ideas and rites of conquered paganism, the established religion continued to appropriate such artistic forms and motives as still survived among those whose ancient faith it had indeed superseded, but into whose inheritance of degenerate culture it had also stepped. Whatever check upon æsthetic effort had formerly been imposed by dread of idolatry was now removed; but as creative power and technical skill were alike lacking, art fell more and more into the thraldom of convention. Then organised theology laid the most fatal of all obstacles in the way of its progress by making it the mere vehicle of dogma. Not the design itself, but the idea to be made concrete by it, became the paramount, indeed the sole, consideration. This necessarily meant stagnation. As by little and little the symbol itself was fused with the thing symbolised, and the sanctity and authority which belonged to the one were transferred to the other, an intense and blighting conservatism became the ruling principle in art. Existing representations of Christ, the Virgin, the apostles, the saints, and current representations of incidents from Bible story thus came to be regarded, not as efforts of previous artists to embody an ideal or depict a scene, but as things sacred in themselves; originality was discouraged; innovation was avoided as perilously near to heresy. Thus art everywhere exhibited the same tendency towards fixity and finality as was at the same time manifest throughout the realm of thought. The spreading spirit of asceticism meanwhile co-operated with sacerdotalism to widen the breach between art and life. The first Christian art, despite its narrow limitations of theme

and style, had often been rich in realistic detail. All realism now gave way to formalism. To the monkish mosaic-worker or illuminator the whole external world rested under the divine curse, and if he turned away from every shape of natural beauty as a snare set by the evil one to entrap his soul, most of all did he recoil in horror from the human body, which for him was a mass of corruption, and an object so loathsome that even to think of it was sin. All direct study of nature, and in particular all study of the nude, were thus rendered impossible. Bound in the trammels thrust upon it by the Church, cut off from all healthy contact with reality, art inevitably became hard, conventional, and grotesque. Its bondage to dogma and tradition, and its consequent divorce from nature and truth, were now indeed complete.

The results are shown in the efforts of the Byzantine school, which, whether in wall-painting, in mosaic decoration, or in the illumination of manuscripts, have all the well-marked characteristics of purely hieratic art. Choked by their didactic aim, overloaded with symbolic detail, these cramped and unlovely productions of minds enslaved by ecclesiastical tradition are utterly lifeless in conception and composition; their groupings exhibit no attempt at realistic representation; while their human figures are ill-drawn, in attitudes which are hard and conventional, with draperies disposed into stiff mechanical folds, and faces which are almost void of expression. Themes and treatment, down even to relatively trivial accessories of design, being now reduced to formula, the artist's task was merely to imitate and reproduce; no independent play of thought, no appeal to nature was permitted, and, as a consequence, Byzantine art changed so little in matter or manner during several hundred years that, according to

experts, it is almost impossible to decide on internal evidence alone the date of any given picture. The fundamental difference of spirit between this sombre art and that of early Christian times is, however, as has already been noted, the principal point for emphasis. Among the first Christian artists those miracles of Christ had enjoyed the greatest favour which revealed divine mercy as well as divine power—the raising of Lazarus, for example, the feeding of the multitude, the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, of the blind man, and of the paralytic; and even when scenes of a quite different character were introduced at all—when Christ was depicted before Pilate, or taunted by soldiers, or crowned with thorns—the desire, of which I have already spoken, to avoid all harrowing suggestions is very apparent. In Byzantine art we enter upon a new range of interests and motives. There is a tendency to neglect the love and gentleness of Christ, and to accentuate His greatness as king and judge. Apocalyptic subjects abound, a favourite theme for apsidal mosaics being a colossal figure of the Lord, as "Rex tremendae majestatis," surrounded by the symbols of St. John's vision on Patmos. Then, with the firm establishment of the school, attention is more and more concentrated upon the Passion, the Crucifixion, and the Last Judgment. The tragic horrors of the work of redemption considered on the human side also come to the front. With this the formulation of a definite type in the representation of the Saviour becomes a matter of some importance. In very early painting and sculpture the powerful influences of the classic tradition were shown in the general practice of depicting Christ as a beautiful, god-like, unbearded youth, with crisp, curled hair, and a cheerful cast of countenance. Then towards the end of the fourth century another type began to appear beside

this—that of a man of some thirty years of age, with a long, mature face, and a grave, often sad, expression. For a time art hesitated between these two ideals. This hesitation reflected the current controversy beween those who maintained that as Christ was the Perfect Man, so He must have been perfect in bodily form no less than in spirit, and those who replied that as the Man of Sorrows He had neither "form nor comeliness," nor any trace of personal beauty "that we should desire Him." Gradually, under the influences of settling theology and a darkening religious temper, the ascetic type—that of the suffering Saviour—gained ground. It was this ascetic type which ultimately passed, with some modification, from the Byzantine school into the religious art of western Europe, by which it was generally, though not universally, adopted. Under the same influences a corresponding change also took place in the treatment of the Crucifixion. At first this had been represented under the forms of a mystical convention; no attempt was made to visualise and reproduce the scene; the Saviour was depicted clothed in a tunic and still alive on the cross; His eyes were wide open; and neither in His attitude nor in the expression of His perfectly placid face was the slightest trace of agony allowed to appear. Even after the sixth General Council at Constantinople, in 692, had enjoined the historical rendering of all scriptural subjects in preference to the purely symbolical, the omission of realistic detail from this particular scene continued to be accepted as part of the traditional formula. It was not till the eleventh century that the fast-spreading spirit of religious gloom, and the growth of a morbid love of everything painful and repellent, which were among the salient features of that age, gave a fresh character to what had now become the central motive in art. It was then that for the first time the

Lord was represented as dead on the cross, and that the vivid delineation of His physical sufferings became a main purpose of the artist. This new mode originated in the east, but became firmly established in the west during the following century, such changes as appeared in it being referable to differences rather of technique than of underlying conception.

II.—THE BEGINNINGS OF THE REVIVAL OF ART

Byzantine traditions dominated Italian art till the end of the thirteenth century. The record of the great revival in art may be said to open with the first clear signs of reaction against them. In dealing with such early efforts towards emancipation we are, it is true, carrying our inquiry back beyond the general chronological limits which we have assigned for our study. But in the history of art this first Renaissance, as it is sometimes called, represents the primary workings of all those impulses which were presently to generate the movements of the Renaissance proper. Without some knowledge of it these later movements would, indeed, be unintelligible. Taking the closing thirteenth century as our point of departure, we shall moreover find that from this time on our narrative is one of continuous evolution.

There is, as usual, considerable uncertainty about beginnings. It is commonly held that the first painter to touch the dry abstractions of the reigning mode with something of life and truth was Duccio di Buoninsegna (1260-1340), the founder of the Sienese school, in whose frescoes, strictly though they follow the forms of the Italo-Byzantine tradition, a slight infusion of a new spirit has been detected. More importance, however, attaches to the somewhat earlier sculpture of Niccolà Pisano (1206-78), whose masterpiece—the beau-

tiful hexagonal pulpit in the Baptistery at Pisa—was finished in or before the year of Duccio's birth. In general design this is noteworthy as the first example of the influence of northern Gothic in Italian architecture. But its chief interest for us at the moment is to be sought in the bas-reliefs depicting the Birth of Christ, the Adoration of the Magi, the Circumcision, the Crucifixion, and the Last Judgment, for these, down even to the attitudes and gestures of the figures, are wrought in obvious imitation of the rich carvings of the ancient Roman sarcophagi, which evidently the sculptor must have studied very diligently. It is significant that thus early we may trace the power of a revived study of the antique in breaking the force of mediæval tradition. But, possibly because Niccolà's work was inspired by classic models rather than by nature, and was thus derivative and not original, it seems to have transmitted little life-giving energy to those who immediately followed. About the same time came Cimabue (1240-1302) whose name holds a high place in the annals of art because he was long regarded as the first painter in what Vasari calls the "modern manner." Though trained in the rigid rules of the dominant school, he nevertheless, it was alleged, began the imitation of nature; Vasari records that he even painted a St. Thomas directly from the living model—"a new thing in these times"; while Symonds declares, with some show of reason, that "the outstretched arms of the infant Christ" in the famous Rucellai Madonna—the picture which is said to have been carried in triumph through the streets of Florence to its place in Santa Maria Novella—"have been copied from nature, not merely borrowed from tradition."* Unfortunately, however, recent criticism has dealt very destructively with Cimabue's name and

* "The Fine Arts," pp. 138, 139.

fame. Vasari's biography is now declared to be a mere bundle of fables. We know nothing for certain about the man's artistic achievement. "It cannot," we are told, "be proved that a single picture attributed to Cimabue was painted by him"*; even the Rucellai Madonna is now held to be the work of another hand —probably Duccio's. All we can safely say about him, therefore, is that there is doubtless some foundation for the old tradition which placed him in the forefront of those who sought to revivify Italian painting by putting life into accepted formulas.

We get, fortunately, on firmer ground when we come to his great successor, Giotto di Bondone (1276-1337). In his case again, it is true, a good deal of legend has to be brushed aside, especially such legend as has grown up about his supposed relations with Cimabue. A pretty and very popular story runs to the effect that Giotto was the son of a peasant of Vespignano, near Florence; that as a boy he tended his father's flocks in the pasture land about that village; that there he was discovered by Cimabue, who saw him drawing one of his lambs on a flat rock with a sharp stone, and, delighted, took him into his house as his pupil. An older variant relates that Giotto was apprenticed to a wool stapler in Florence, whose business he forsook in order to linger day after day about Cimabue's workshop. These, however, must be dismissed as fables. But happily the destruction of such legendary accretions does not in the least impair the substantial value of Giotto's work. It is quite unlikely that he was ever a pupil of Cimabue, to whom, it would appear, he owed little or nothing in the way of impulse or guidance. How far, on the other hand, he

* Editorial note in Langton Douglas's edition of Crowe and Cavalcaselli's "History of Painting in Italy," i. 181.

may, as is now supposed, have been indebted to Niccolà Pisano and his sons, and to painters who were already busy in Rome, is a question which need not detain us here. The one thing we have to remember is that with Giotto the return to nature definitely begins in Italian art. Thus, if the tale told about his childish efforts with rock and stone be (as it doubtless is) mere fiction, at least, as Symonds well says, it may be taken as a parable; "he was not found beneath a church roof tracing a mosaic, but on the open mountains, trying to draw the portrait of the living thing committed to his care." * Even a casual study of his production suffices to show how much the free and energetic life of Florence must have counted in his education as an artist, and how deeply the distinctive quality of his workmanship reflects, not the abstractions of theological speculations or the petrified formulas of the cloister, but the bustle of the streets, with their crowds, processions, fêtes, and combats. It was in this open-air school, and not in the dry and pedantic labours of his predecessors, that he gained that keen sense of the dramatic possibilities of painting which, more than anything else, gives him his peculiar position and importance in the evolution of art. We do not value his work for correctness of drawing (he probably knew nothing of anatomy), nor for constructive skill, nor for ideal beauty. We value it for its truth and vivacity. For his contemporaries and immediate successors his principal merit rightly seemed to be this: that beyond all other painters he had given to his individuals and his groups the manner and semblance of life. "His figures," writes one of the Florentine chroniclers, "present so fully the lineaments of nature that they seem to live and breathe; their attitudes and gestures

* "The Fine Arts," p. 139.

are so characteristic that one could believe that they were weeping, rejoicing, and performing other acts for the pleasure of those who regard and praise the genius and the hand of the artist."* Especially significant, therefore, are his sense of humour, his love of realistic detail, the boldness with which he combines homely incidents with his religious themes. In one of his altar-pieces, for instance, he depicts the divine babe sucking his thumb; in his frescoes on the history of St. Francis there are children waiting to throw stones at the saint, and a friar clambering into a tree to get a good view of the procession; while his fondness for introducing, wherever possible, dogs, donkeys, and oxen (often done with an admirable sense of character) is one of the most delightful features of his work. That work can be profitably studied at many places, but it will be enough for us here to refer to the twenty-eight frescoes just mentioned, which (of course with the help of pupils and apprentices) he executed in the upper church of St. Francis at Assisi. Here in particular we may note the soundly realistic quality of his mind. A man of shrewd common sense, he had no trace in his composition of mysticism or ecstatic piety, and his personal sympathy with the ascetic ideal preached by the founder of the Minor Brotherhood was so slight that he even wrote a *canzone* against voluntary poverty and the hypocrisy of many who professed the spiritual life. In painting the legend of St. Francis, therefore—and in doing this he had the advantage of fresh material not yet conventionalised and of a relatively free hand—he set himself simply to realise and reproduce the dramatic elements in his story, and to make his painting the vehicle of narrative and characterisation. It is his general success—which at the time and in the circum-

* Villani, "Liber de civitatis Florentinæ famosis civibus," 1404-5.

stances was often remarkable—in achieving this object that gives Giotto his leading claim upon our attention. It is to be regretted that his followers, the Giotteschi, abandoned the path of nature for that of imitation, and by their fidelity to his leadership proved false to the spirit of his teaching. Yet in a treatise on painting which is interesting as the first modern book of its kind we find one of them, Cennino Cennini (1360-1420), expressly advising the student to draw something every day from nature.

III.—THE EARLY RENAISSANCE IN ITALIAN ART

Giotto's connection with St. Francis will serve to remind us that the teachings and spirit of the saint of Assisi were the principal influences behind the revival of Christian art at the end of the thirteenth century, and the main source of the fresh life which now came into it, to the destruction of its rigid formalism. It was he who set a current of vitalising religious enthusiasm flowing amid the jejune abstractions of theology, and this resulted in the reanimation of Christian painting no less than of Christian thought. At the same time the essentially popular and democratic character of his gospel, the "catholic wholeness" of his sympathies, his sense of the brotherhood of all living creatures in the great family of God, and his tender love of sun and moon, wind and cloud, beast and bird and flower, stirred the artist to a new feeling of the sanctity of earth's long-neglected little common things. It is interesting thus to associate the work of a master whose own ideals were fundamentally ascetic with artistic movements which involved an increasing recognition of the value and beauty of the present life. Giotto's painting, like his personal character, gives us a fine

example of religious earnestness blending with vigorous naturalism. But if we wish to realise the full meaning of the spiritual rapture and mystical tenderness breathed by St. Francis into religion, we must turn to the work of the Dominican monk, Giovanni da Fiesole, whom we know as Fra Angelico—"Il Beato Fra Angelico" (1387-1445). On the threshold of the Renaissance he is the great interpreter in art of the purest ideas of mediæval Christianity. With him painting was indeed an inspiration, and his skill with the brush merely the means whereby he might express the beatitude of God's elect who pass through temptation and persecution to that utter peace of heaven which the world can neither give nor take away. "This truly angelic father," writes Vasari, "spent his whole life in the service of God and his fellow creatures. He was a man of simple habits, and most saintly in all his ways. He kept himself from all worldliness, and was so good a friend to the poor that I think his soul must already be in heaven. He worked continually at his art, but would never paint anything excepting sacred subjects. He might have been a wealthy man, but he did not care for money, and used to say that true riches consist in being content with little. He might have enjoyed great dignities, both in his convent and in the world, but he cared nothing for these things, saying that he who would practise painting has need of quiet, and that he who would do the work of Christ must live continually with Him. He never corrected or retouched his works, but left them as he first painted them, saying that such was the will of God. He never took his pencil up without a prayer, and could not paint a Crucifixion without the tears running down his cheeks. And the saints whom he painted are more like saints in face and expression than those of any other master." This passage suggests

both the singular charm and the well-marked limitations of Fra Angelico's art. His range is very small; his vision hardly extends beyond the walls of his monastery; he has no dramatic instinct or power of characterisation. But in his groups of angels and saints he shows himself beyond all other masters the painter of a simple childlike faith for simple childlike minds.

Meanwhile, the conditions of the time had tended to keep alive the spirit of asceticism and other-worldliness which had reigned supreme in the best religious thought of the middle ages. The growing corruptions of ecclesiastical Christianity and the general profligacy of society filled many a strong, stern soul with an oppressive sense of the wickedness of men and the fearful certainty of the judgment to come. Safety could be found only in the cloister, and the wrath of God could be turned aside only by prayer, self-mortification, and fasting. The heavy terrorism of the tenth century thus reappeared in the thirteenth and fourteenth. The great solemn hymn, "Dies iræ, dies illa, Solvet sæclum in favilla"—the work, probably, of a disciple of St. Francis, Thomas of Celano—dates from about 1250. Some seventy years later Dante's "Divina Commedia" gave a final imaginative representation of the unutterable felicity of paradise, offset by the struggles of the sinners in purgatory and the unending torments of the damned. An epitome of the philosophy and the most powerful expression of the highest religious mood of the time, this mighty poem in turn became a fertile source of inspiration and material for painters intent on embodying the same ascetic teaching. The frescoes on The Judgment, Paradise, and the Abyss, in the Strozzi Chapel of Santa Maria Novella at Florence, by Andrea di Cione, called Orcagna (1308-76), are notable illustrations of direct Dantean influence. But

the most considerable and complete examples of this particular spirit are provided by certain wall-paintings in the Campo Santo at Pisa. The history of this famous cemetery is itself interesting. In 1188 Archbishop Lanfranchi had a large quantity of earth taken from Mount Calvary and shipped to Pisa, and of this sacred soil the city burial ground, which was also laid out symbolically according to the traditional proportions of Noah's Ark, was composed. The surrounding arcades or cloisters were built by Giovanni, son of Niccolà Pisano, in 1278. Then the inner walls of these cloisters were in due time covered with frescoes on various subjects taken from scripture and the hagiography: among them the Passion, the Resurrection, Christ's appearance to His disciples, and the Ascension, the Anchorites of the Theban Desert, the affliction of Job, a number of episodes from Old Testament history, from the creation to Solomon, and some miscellaneous legends of saints. But by far the most important of these decorations, and the ones which I now have specially in mind, are the three on the Triumph of Death, the Last Judgment, and (in continuation of this) Hell, which, formerly attributed to Orcagna and still often referred to under his name, are now known to be the work of other artists, perhaps the brothers Ambrogio and Pietro Lorenzetti of Siena, or some unidentified painters of their school. Nowhere, not even in the pages of the "Inferno" itself, do we come into such intimate touch with the gloomy and ferocious spirit of the current religion, nowhere do we feel so keenly the horror of the nightmare phantoms by which men's minds were haunted, as in these astonishing designs. The darkness of the divine curse hangs over them all. In the first of the series we see Death, the inexorable conqueror, everywhere at work among men.

A party of knights and ladies riding out a-hawking are suddenly stopped by three open coffins containing, one a shrouded body, the second a corpse in a state of decomposition, the third a skeleton. By this grim sight they are reminded in the midst of their pleasure that Death is waiting for them too. To the right of the scene, richly clad cavaliers and their mistresses sit in an orchard making music and love, while cupids fly among the trees overhead; but Death, portrayed as a ferocious and hideous hag, descends upon them with scythe held ready to strike. Above, angels and devils contend for the souls of the departed, some of which are borne upwards towards heaven, while others are carried to a fiery mountain into the belching volcano of which they are hurled headlong. On the extreme left of the picture the representation of a hermitage, the inmates of which are engaged in the peaceful occupations of the cenobite life, points the moral by showing how men may best prepare against the grim foe who comes upon them like a thief in the night. The second design contains a sequel to this in a vision of the Last Judgment. In the centre, enthroned and crowned, sit Christ and the Virgin, the former stern of aspect and menacing in gesture, the latter looking down in pity on the lost. Angels and apostles are ranged in balanced groups on either hand; below, divided by celestial messengers, are two great companies: on the right of the Heavenly Judge the host of the saved, on the left that of the damned. The ultimate fate of these last is portrayed in the third fresco. The centre of the composition is occupied by a monstrous figure of Satan, with bestial face, bearded, horned, as gross and shocking as Dante's Lucifer, though not reminiscent of this in detail; while the remainder of the picture is crowded with the writhing forms of men and women undergoing all the varied

tortures which the imagination of an artist who had supped full of the horrors of mediæval theology could devise. Such in outline is the tripartite sermon preached in fresco on the walls of the Pisan cemetery; and the lesson of it is taken up and reinforced by one more painting—thought to be the work of the brothers Lorenzetti—depicting the temptations and penances, the vigils and visions of the anchorites of the Thebaid. Here the artist-preachers have proclaimed with an emphasis which is unmistakable the central truth of ascetic philosophy—that the soul's salvation could be certainly secured only by flight from a sinful world.

It will be observed that with Fra Angelico we have already entered the fifteenth century, and that the foregoing account of the Pisan frescoes is therefore in the nature of a chronological retrogression. It must not, however, be assumed that the Beatified Friar is thus taken out of his proper perspective. In spirit he did not in any sense belong to the *quattrocentisti,* or men of the fourteen hundreds. While he was carrying forward the traditions of a departing generation, they, on the other hand, were following the very different lead of his contemporary, Tomasso Guidi, always known by his nickname of "Masaccio" (1401-28). Brief as was his life, for he died, as will be seen, at twenty-seven, "Hulking Tom"* holds a high place in history as the recognised founder of the modern style of realistic painting—the style in which the influences of symbolic art are finally discarded. "From the first," says Vasari, "he realised that painting is nothing else but the simple imitation of natural objects in drawing and colour, and by unwearied study he overcame the difficulties and

* This is Browning's rendering (see "Fra Lippo Lippi") of Guidi's nickname, which he owed to his slouching appearance and slovenly habits.

imperfections of art. He was the first to give his figures beautiful attitudes, natural movement, vivacity of expression, and a relief similar to reality." This is not a bad description of Masaccio's work, and suffices to indicate its general significance. His frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel of the Church of the Carmine at Florence—including the remarkable "Expulsion from Paradise"—have always been regarded as marking an epoch in art, and were a source of continual and healthy inspiration to the Florentines of his own and the succeeding generation. His influence is to be traced among these new men in every direction. We see it in the realistic detail with which Andrea del Castagna (1390-1457) fills his picture of "The Lord's Supper," and Paola Uccello (1397-1475) his wonderfully dramatic rendering of the Flood, and Dominico Ghirlandajo (1449-94) his representation of the death of Santa Fina, at San Gemignano. We see it in the work of Fra Lippo Lippi (1406-69), who formed his style on the Brancacci frescoes with such success that those who saw his first paintings declared that the spirit of Masaccio had descended upon him. We see it in an even more suggestive way in the change which came over the spirit and manner of Benozzo Gozzoli (1420-78). The pupil and favourite companion of Fra Angelico, Gozzoli began to paint as the avowed disciple of his beloved master, and his early productions may be said to represent almost the last efforts of purely religious art in Italy. But falling presently under the spell of Masaccio, he became a pronounced realist, even to the extent of completely subordinating the religious content of his subject-matter to its picturesque accessories. His "Adoration of the Magi" is turned into a rich panorama of the sumptuous life of Medicean Florence. In his frescoes on the career of St. Augustine

at San Gemignano there is much delightful realism, as notably in the famous schoolroom scene with the unhappy youngster "horsed" for punishment. In the "Drunkenness of Noah," one of the Old Testament episodes on the north wall of the Campo Santo at Pisa, we have, frankly treated, a bit of Tuscan vintage life, with youths and maidens picking grapes in a thoroughly Italian landscape, a stout peasant trampling the fruit in a winepress, and in the central foreground a couple of children frightened at a barking dog. Incidentally, the reference here made to landscape should be noted, for it is a matter of vital interest that, first systematically used by Fra Filippo Lippi, nature now began to be regularly substituted for the architectural background decorations which even Masaccio had still employed. The growth of a feeling for truth in the treatment of landscape may be traced in the case of Alesso Baldovinetti, of whom Vasari writes: "Alesso was a very diligent artist, who tried to copy minutely every detail in Mother Nature. He loved painting landscapes exactly as they are, and you see in his pictures rivers, bridges, rocks, plants, fruit trees, roads, fields, towns, castles, and an infinite number of similar objects. In his 'Nativity' you can count the separate straws and knots on the thatched roof of the hut, and you see the stones in the ruined house behind worn away by rain, and the thick root of ivy growing up in the wall is painted with so much accuracy that the green leaves are differently shaded on either side; and among the shepherds he introduced a snake crawling in the most natural manner along the wall." By this time landscape had indeed become a prominent feature of painting, as we may see on turning, for instance, to the productions of Verrocchio (1435-88) and Filippo Lippi's pupil, Sandro Botticelli (1447-1510); though, of course,

even now nature was subordinate and accessory, and there was no landscape painting in our sense of the term.

The last-named artist is further interesting as illustrating another formative influence which was now beginning to appear in Italian art, and which was destined to grow rapidly in power—the influence of classical antiquity. The humanism of the age of Lorenzo de' Medici, Politian, and Leo Battista is very apparent in his work, which owes not a little of its peculiar charm to the almost unique way in which it blends Christian tradition with the freshness of the early pagan revival. He delighted in subjects taken from Greek and Latin mythology no less than in traditional religious themes, and it has been rightly remarked as a suggestive characteristic of his craftsmanship that his pagan goddesses, his saints, and his Madonnas are all of the same general type. His "Birth of Venus," "Spring," and "Mars and Venus," which were all painted for the Medici villa at Costello, are steeped in the sentiment of renascent classicism—a classicism which was as yet spontaneous and childlike; while his frescoes in Pope Sixtus IV.'s chapel are scarcely less interesting in another way—because, that is, they are full of materials drawn from classical architecture and sculpture. It is evident that, like another pupil (and, indeed, the reputed son) of Fra Lippo, Filippino Lippi (1457-1507), who filled many sketch-books with drawings of designs and details taken from them, Botticelli was an ardent student of the monuments of ancient Rome, the power and beauty of which men were just then beginning to appreciate. It is the more curious, therefore, that late in life Botticelli underwent an intellectual reaction, devoted himself to the illustration of Dante, and, finally, becoming a disciple of Savonarola, abandoned art entirely. The power of the classic revival,

together with nearly all the new forces which were affecting art at the time, is even more conspicuously shown in Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), perhaps the greatest figure in Italian art, outside Venice, during the second half of the fifteenth century. He was a personal friend of some of the leading humanists; as a youth he studied with avidity the collection of antiquities made by his master Squarcione; later on, he spent his wealth freely in making such a collection of his own; and though his paintings deal generally with the conventional religious themes—his "Triumph of Julius Cæsar" at Hampton Court is the most important exception—they are everywhere imbued with the severe spirit of ancient art. With Mantegna we may join Luca Signorelli (1441-1523), in whom the passion for nature combined with the passion for antiquity. Though he has been called "the Dante of fifteenth century painting"—a title which is not inappropriate in view of the intensity of his work—he treated themes from the "Purgatorio" and from Ovid's "Metamorphoses" in precisely the same way, and in his religious frescoes in the Cathedral at Orvieto no less than in his "Education of Pan," he made the nude figure for the first time a prominent element in the composition. Symonds has said of him that he thus "powerfully promoted the rehabilitation of the body achieved for art by the Renaissance." *

A marked general feature in the evolution of Italian painting at this time is suggested here, which is so important that we may fittingly pause to emphasise it. Still very largely under the direct control of the Church, painting remained for the most part nominally religious; that is, the traditional themes from Bible story and the lives of the saints continued to provide the principal matter for the artist's skill. Yet it needs

* "The Fine Arts," p. 213.

only the most superficial acquaintance with its history to perceive that meanwhile art was being gradually transformed from within. The old subjects were reproduced, but they were handled now in a spirit increasingly different from that which had characterised such men as Giotto and Fra Angelico. We have only to turn from either of these thoroughly devout and single-hearted workmen who, however imperfect their technique, at least put their souls and their faith into what they painted, to such an artist, say, as Ghirlandajo, to realise that genuine religious feeling has vanished or is fast vanishing, and that the thought of the artist is now concerned primarily, not with the doctrinal bearings of his subject, but with its pictorial effects. These tendencies, of course, reflected the changing spirit of an age of growing humanism, inquiry, and general indifference to spiritual things; for a time they were apparent in certain painters only; but we shall witness their further developments in the art of the following century. Here, however, it should be remembered that this change in the direction of the secularisation of art even in the treatment of sacred topics had another side. It has been pointed out that Fra Lippo Lippi, bound down as he was to such sacred topics, was apt to take unwarrantable liberties with them, making his angels out of street urchins and painting the portraits of his peasant loves for his virgins and saints; and he has been severely blamed for doing this. But it must be recognised that this was his way—and the only way that was open to him—of escape from the narrowly conventional restrictions of religious painting into that wider naturalism of which his generation was in quest. A parallel may be instituted here between these early naturalists in art and the last of the three Greek tragic poets. By the rules

of the Attic stage, Euripides was forced against the true bias of his genius and sympathies to treat those colossal themes of the heroic past out of which his predecessors had made their tragedies. But the spirit of reverence and piety had by this time gone, and in his hands the ancient legends become realistic melodramas, and the gigantic figures of old, Athenian men and women of his own century. While preserving the traditional framework of Attic tragedy, Euripides thus gave it an entirely new tone and meaning, bringing that which had been remote and superhuman down to the plane of actual life. In much the same way the Italian painters of the early Renaissance, dealing with subjects which were remote and superhuman, brought their art down to the plane of actual life, maintaining its forms as prescribed by Church and convention, but radically modifying its character. This is the general significance of the plea for a freer realistic art, which Browning has put into the mouth of his Fra Lippo Lippi:

> The beauty and the wonder and the power,
> The shapes of things, their colours, lights and shades,
> Changes, surprises—and God made it all!
> For what? Do you feel thankful, ay or no,
> For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,
> The mountain round it and the sky above,
> Much more the figures of man, woman, child,
> These are the frame to? What's it all about?
> To be passed over, despised? or dwelt upon,
> Wondered at? Oh, this last, of course! you say.
> But why not do as well as say—paint these
> Just as they are, careless what comes of it?
> God's works—paint any one, and count it crime
> To let a truth slip.

Men woke up to find that there were more things in heaven and earth worth painting than had been dreamed of in the philosophy of the schools. But the time was not yet ripe for a frankly realistic art. Painting was

still in bondage to the Church. They had therefore to incorporate their newly awakened interest in the things and people about them with the materials of religious doctrine and sacred story upon which they were compelled to work.

While we have not here to concern ourselves with the development of technique as such, it is necessary, none the less, to note that this was an important factor in widening the scope of art during the fifteenth century, and particularly in the growth of naturalism. Science now came to the help of genius. In considering the limitations of a painter like Giotto we must never forget how much he was hampered by imperfect knowledge and the meagreness of his resources. The painters of the next age, however they might compare with him in natural power, had at least a greater capacity of expression; they were able to do so much more than he had done, in part because they knew more and had more adequate resources at their command. The direct study of the living model, and, as in the case of men like Antonio Pollaiuolo (1433-98) and Signorelli, of the dead body, was a matter of incalculable moment in the education of the artist for the treatment of his human figures; until mastery of the elements of anatomy had become a regular stage in his preparation for his work, progress in this direction was manifestly impossible. The application of exact science to painting was another potent influence in artistic development; as, for example, in the matter of perspective. In this, the great Florentine bronze worker, Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455) had pointed the way. But the painter who first resolutely set himself to master its problems was that Paolo di Dono who has already been mentioned under his familiar name of Uccello—a name which he is supposed to have owed to his special fondness for painting birds. The

ardour with which he pursued his studies in this new branch of technical scholarship bordered on fanaticism; he sacrificed his financial welfare and his domestic peace to them; it is said that he would sit up over them the whole night long, and that his wife could wring from him no other answer to her appeals than the ever-repeated: "O, che dolce cosa e questa prospettiva!"—"O, what a sweet thing is this perspective!" But however unwise he may have been from the point of view of his personal interests, he greatly advanced his art; and from his time onward, theory going hand in hand with practice, the question of scientific perspective received increasingly careful attention.

Without entering further into details, we can now see how the enlargement of the scope of art, and its transformation from a vehicle of religious ideas and sentiments into a means of reproducing and interpreting the most varied aspects of nature and human life, were aided by its rapid evolution along technical lines. One other influence which helped to change it in a very vital way has still to be mentioned. This was the establishment of the modern method of oil painting. Tradition has attributed the invention of this to the two Flemish painters, the brothers Van Eyck (Hubert, 1370?-1426; Jan, 1390?-1440). Their title to such distinction and the real nature of their innovation are now matters of dispute. It is at any rate certain that a new process of preparing, using, or drying colours was introduced about the middle of the fifteenth century, and gave rise to what we specifically know as oil painting; and what we have here to realise is the way in which this affected the general destinies of art. The spread of oil painting greatly strengthened the spirit of individualism in art, for it developed and popularised the easel picture as a rival to the mural painting. So long as mural painting

provided, not indeed the only, but the principal occupation of the artist, his efforts were mainly confined to the decoration of ecclesiastical and public buildings. He was, in fact, the servant of the Church or the City, and what he did was conditioned and defined by the character of his service. The introduction of oil painting brought with it a marked change in his status. It meant that he no longer had to wait for his commission and to undertake only what was assigned to him; a portable canvas enabled him to do his own work on his own impulse and in his own studio. It meant, too, that he had a larger and more varied public to work for, and this reacted upon the quality of his production and greatly favoured the general tendency towards breadth, eclecticism, realism, and the growth of the lay spirit. As a factor of importance in the transformation of Renaissance art, the rise of oil painting, and with it of the private purchaser, therefore deserves emphasis. A comparison between the effects of this and those produced by the printing press is too obvious to need elaboration.

IV.—THE GOLDEN AGE OF ITALIAN ART

We now come to the closing years of the fifteenth century, and cross the boundary line into the sixteenth. This brings us to the golden age of Italian painting—the age of Michelangelo Buonarrotti (1475-1564), Raffaelo Sanzio, or Raphael (1483-1520), and Antonio Allegri, called Correggio from the name of his birthplace (1494?-1534); of the great Venetians, Giovanni Bellini (1428-1516), Giorgio Barbarelli, known as Giorgione (1476-1511), Tiziano Vicello, or Titian (1490?-1576), Jacopo Robusti, whose familiar name of Tintoretto, or the little dyer, was derived from his father's occupation

(1518-94), Paolo Caliari, or Veronese (1528-88), and of many another master only less famous than these. On the threshold of this wonderful epoch stands the mighty figure of that epitome of the Renaissance in all its many-sidedness, Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), who belongs to it in spirit though chronologically his activity as a painter falls mainly within the preceding generation. The life of Michelangelo, on the other hand, carries us far forward into that age of silver which followed rapidly upon the age of gold.

Throughout the whole range of Italian art during this period of its culmination, the influences of humanism and of the universal mania for the antique are everywhere apparent. It is in architecture, of course, that they are shown in the most formal way. Already that style which we call "Renaissance" had been firmly established in Italy, whence it had also begun to spread to the countries north of the Alps; and as the origin of such style is to be sought in the revival of classic forms, it is significant that it should have taken its rise, not as the literary movement had done, in Florence, but in Rome. It is true that the great leader of the new taste, Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1466), was a Florentine, and that his most important work was done in his native city; but it was during his early residence in Rome that classical enthusiasm was first awakened within him. It is a singular fact that down to this time it had never occurred to Roman architects to imitate their ancient buildings; careless of the irreparable damage done, they quarried in them freely for materials for their own uses, but did not dream of going to them for inspiration or instruction. The growing spirit of humanism now led to the rediscovery of the art no less than of the literature of classical antiquity. The search for manuscripts was accompanied by an

equally zealous search for ancient statues and fragments of decorative sculpture, ornaments, medals and gems, and with such recovered treasures nobles and cardinals now filled their palaces. The systematic study of classical architecture was one phase of this general rebirth of the imperial past. The value of the Roman monuments was now fully realised. Raphael himself was for a time inspector of them; and, addressing the Pope in a famous memorandum of 1518 or 1519, he bitterly complains of the destruction which was still going on among them, imploring his Holiness to take under his own protection whatever remained to testify to the greatness and power of the divine spirit of antiquity. As a matter of personal interest, it may be added that the illustrious painter's premature death was caused by a fever contracted while he was superintending some excavations among the city's ruins.

Such, then, was the impulse behind Renaissance architecture, which, entering though it now did upon a period of almost unbroken supremacy all over Europe, yet found its most magnificent example in St. Peter's at Rome. This mighty witness to human ambition and power—a fitting embodiment of the spirit of the worldly Julius and of the genius of its chief architect, Michelangelo—was "designed to be the eternal monument of the glory and universality of Catholicism," while it has in fact become "the most impressive memorial of its decay."* Wandering down its vast aisles, amid splendours of art which only too eloquently proclaim the pagan temper of its builders, the thoughtful student can hardly fail to be reminded afresh of the real meaning of the great contemporary Teutonic revolt against the debased religion for which it stood—a revolt, he will further remember, precipitated by the means em-

* Lecky, "History of Rationalism," chap. iii.

ployed in the collection of money for its completion. He will see in it, moreover, in another way, a colossal symbol of the new era which had now dawned upon the world. Gothic architecture had been essentially Christian architecture—the expression of the feelings and aspirations of the centuries during which faith had been genuine and devotion intense. In the substitution of Renaissance architecture, which, though pagan in source and inspiration, was none the less applied to the purposes even of Christian worship, we have a striking illustration of the immense and fundamental changes which were at work throughout the entire range of man's moral and intellectual life. The historian whom I have just quoted notes the significance of the fact that "Cologne Cathedral, the last of the great mediæval works, remained unfinished, while the whole energies of Europe were concentrated upon the church of St. Peter at Rome." In this fact we have an index, not only of the world-wide variation in taste, but also of a general collapse of the ancient fabric of thought.

Sculpture tells us much the same tale. We have seen that the new movement was anticipated by Niccolà Pisano's imitations of bas-reliefs on Roman sarcophagi. Then Lorenzo Ghiberti, who wrought the wonderful scriptural designs on the two great bronze doors of the Baptistery at Florence, broke through the narrowing conventions of existing plastic art by a direct appeal to nature. "From my earliest days," he declared, "I have always tried to discover how nature reveals herself in art, and how I may best draw near her; how forms really present themselves to the eye, and on what principles the arts of painting and sculpture should be practised." Another master of naturalism appeared at the same time in the greatest of the early Tuscan sculptors, Donati di

Betto Bardi, or Donatello (1386-1466), in whom, however, we also mark the glowing strength of classic inspiration. A student in Rome, along with his friend Brunelleschi, of ancient architecture and sculpture, he there caught the finest spirit of the antique, while he yet remained absolutely true to his own individual quality of genius and to the living types of manhood and womanhood which he set himself to portray. While his free use of the nude, even in figures of angels and in his David, is thus an important characteristic of his work, the absence of anything suggesting lifeless imitation of ancient models is even more important. In him, in fact, we perceive the full advantages of the classical revival in its early stages, and before, as Symonds puts it, "pseudo-classicism and pedantry had . . . distorted the judgment" and "misdirected the aim of artists," and while as yet "contact with the antique world served only to stimulate original endeavour."* But the later growth of an undiscriminating enthusiasm for everything antique led sculptors to ignore altogether the essential difference between classic and Christian sentiment, and thus to deprive their work of all the devotional significance which should attach to religious themes. The lovely glazed polychrome bas-reliefs of Luca della Robbia (1399-1482) and his school are full of the tenderest spiritual emotion, and there were other men of the time who carried forward the traditions of a thoroughly earnest Christian art. But the currents of thought and feeling were now running strongly in a different direction, and sculpture, while more and more concerning itself (as in the case of Benvenuto Cellini) with pagan mythology, exhibited its change of temper even more suggestively in the entirely detached and indifferent manner in which it handled Christian motives.

* "The Fine Arts," p. 99.

DAVID

From the statue by Michaelangelo

Before the fifteenth century was out the secularisation of sculpture was practically complete. "For an artist at this time," says Symonds, "a Greek myth and a Christian legend were all one";* whichever he selected, his main interest was in its artistic possibilities, and his chief business to make it the occasion for the display of his knowledge of anatomy and his technical skill. An illustration is at hand in the work of Jacopo Tatti, or Sansovino (1486-1570), whom we may, with Symonds, regard as marking "the final intrusion of paganism into modern art." Sculpture, which had long been used, in subordination to architecture, for the devotional adornment of churches, had now liberated itself from its servitude, and as an independent art was addressing itself frankly to the further stimulation of that sense of the beauty and value of earthly things which had grown up with the classic revival. If to the artist of that time even a fragment of antique sculpture, and still more the Apollo Belvedere, the Laocoon, the Venus of the Vatican† had come as a "revelation of antique civilisation, of the palæstra and the stadium, of the sanctification of the body, of the apotheosis of man, of the religion of life, and nature, and joy,"‡ the labours of the modern sculptor who took such ancient productions as his models, were similarly charged with a message of freedom and strength and physical beauty. Despite his own Dantean seriousness, the intensity of his religious convictions, and that vehement quality of genius which made the repose and temperance of Hellenism impossible to him, it was to this pagan school of art that as a sculptor even Michelangelo belonged. His taste was shaped among the antiquities with which

* "The Fine Arts," p. 123.

† The Apollo was recovered during the pontificate of Alexander VI.; the Laocoon and the Venus during that of Julius II.

‡ Vernon Lee, "Euphorion," i. 193.

Lorenzo de' Medici had enriched the gardens of San Marco, and he himself asserted that the Apollo Belvedere had been his true master. Hence, as we may see in his colossal David, who is simply a splendid type of Greek athlete, in his formidable Moses, who has been not inaptly described as "half prize-fighter, half Jupiter Tonans," in his brooding Jeremiah, who is manifestly a Greek philosopher in meditation, his conspicuous failure to give to his scriptural subjects the appropriate tone and expression.

It will, of course, be evident that the power of classicism could not show itself in the same formal and specific way in painting as in architecture and sculpture, for while in these fields the artist was directly guided by antique models, the painter felt their influence for the most part only indirectly. Yet the strength of that influence, and even its immediacy, are attested in many particulars. We note it most obviously in the immense popularity of subjects taken from mythology, which naturally provided a multitude of motives as congenial to the painter's brush as they were to the poet's pen. We note it in the spell which classical art and literature clearly exercised over the memory and imagination of the artist, even when he was working upon a totally different range of themes. Thus, to take a single example, when Raphael, in his famous Vatican picture, "The Fire in the Borgo," commemorates the miracle by which Leo IV. had extinguished a conflagration near St. Peter's by the sign of the cross, we can see at a glance that the scene he is really depicting is the destruction of Troy, as described in the second "Æneid," and that the group in the left-hand corner is in fact Æneas, with Anchises on his shoulders, and the boy Ascanius at his side, in flight from the blazing city. As a more general illustration of the same assimilative and accom-

modating tendency, I may mention the increasing popularity of the chubby little children who in religious paintings figure as cherubs, but in whom we cannot fail to recognise under very slight modification the Cupids of ancient art. When such tendency is everywhere in the ascendant, it is manifest that we are reaching the end of specifically religious art.

This does not mean that the spirit of devotion is as yet extinct in Italian painting. In the earliest and freshest work of Perugino (Pietro Vannucci, 1466-1524), for example, we have perhaps the perfection of purely pietistic art; though it is surely a significant fact that when in later life his sordid love of gain grew upon him, and (it is alleged) he even became an unbeliever, he continued to drive a thriving trade by the industrious reproduction of Virgins, saints, and Holy Families, all alike steeped in the spirit of vapid emotionalism. In the work of Francesco Raibolino, or Francia (1450-1517), again, we have genuine religious feeling. Two painters of whom mention has already been made in a previous chapter in connection with Savonarola's preaching also deserve a place in this survey for their success in preserving the quality of a truly Christian art. One of these is Lorenzo di Credi (1459-1537), who, notwithstanding his strong interest in the technical side of his craft, remained practically untouched by the paganising movement of his time, though he occasionally yielded to the blandishments of Peruginesque sentimentality. The other is Fra Bartolommeo, also known as Baccio della Porta (1476-1517), who, having as we have seen burned his nude studies in the bonfire of vanities, became a Dominican, and, later returning to painting, devoted himself henceforth entirely to religious work. Yet, on the whole, every influence of this new age made towards

what I have called the secularisation of pictorial art. In its increasing range of subjects painting rejected the control of theology, and asserted its right to go out into the world and back over history and legend for matter for pictorial treatment; and in the spirit of its workmanship, whether the themes selected were sacred or profane, it announced that henceforth its primary concern was with life and character, and with the technical problems of expression and grouping, anatomy, drawing, perspective, light, shade, colour.

This is the central feature of the transformation of art in the season of the full Renaissance; and whatever religious fervour may still be detected in the work of some of the greatest artists—of such men, for instance, as Michelangelo and Raphael—this must not be allowed to obscure for us the reality and significance of the change. The painter was still willing enough to yield his service to a Church which on its side was equally willing to accept and applaud the skill and dexterity of his renderings of sacred things, without inquiring too curiously into their Christian value. But his art was no longer the submissive handmaid of theology. It was, like sculpture, independent; like sculpture, it rejoiced in strength and beauty, freedom and greatness; like sculpture, it helped in the emancipation of thought from the cramping asceticism of mediæval ethics. The development of painting thus falls into its place in our story as one phase of the Renaissance discovery of the world and man.

The evolution of painting as interpretation might be illustrated by the successive changes which marked the treatment of any of the standard motives of Christian art. The Madonna will serve as an example. We need not go farther back than the times of Fra Angelico and Giotto to find this subject handled under the strictest

conditions and with all the accessories of purely religious art. The aim of the artist is not to portray but to express—not to represent a woman and a mother, or even abstract womanhood and motherhood, but to embody certain ideas and feelings, and thereby to awaken the reverence and piety of the spectator. The figure of the Virgin is therefore conceived in an entirely conventional way, and is so designed as to bring out all the dignity which should belong to the Mother of God and the Queen of Heaven; every trace of realism is rigorously excluded as destructive of such dignity; while, on the other hand, symbolism is freely used to enforce doctrinal truth and to heighten the devotional effect. Hence the remoteness of these early Madonnas who, "with no limbs beneath their robes,"* and no hint of common human emotion on their smooth, bland faces, belong wholly to the range of hieratic things and have no point of connection with nature and ordinary life. But by little and little the human elements encroach; domestic detail begins to mingle with and to displace the symbolism; and the Mother of God and Queen of Heaven, while as yet by no means deidealised, becomes in the hands of painters like Fra Lippo Lippi, Bellini, and Botticelli more and more of a woman. In Raphael we note a conflict of tendencies; occasionally, as in the "Sistine Madonna," he makes glorious use of all the divine suggestions of his theme; but more often, as in the "Belle Jardinière" and the "Madonna della Sedia," he simply paints the most beautiful woman he can find as the representative of motherhood, without indicating, either by symbolism or by general tone and expression, the transcendental significance of his type. Upon the realistic movement which such works exemplify there was henceforth but little check. In the further evolution

* Vernon Lee, "Euphorion," i. 195.

of art the divine suggestions, and even the ideal qualities disappear, and all that is left in the Madonnas of Andrea del Sarto, of Correggio, and pre-eminently in those of the Venetian school, is the beauty of the human mother with the human child. We have not here to discuss the religious bearing of this transformation. We have only to lay stress upon it as a fact and an index.

The same general lines of evolution are as clearly marked if we consider more broadly the course of Italian painting through its golden age to its decline, as this is exemplified in the work of any of its representative masters.

A stern, silent, solitary man, Michelangelo, it might seem, was too self-centred and independent, and too much removed from the common currents of his time, to be regarded as the exponent of anything but his own individual taste. Yet when we remember how strongly he was influenced in different ways by the antique marbles of the Medici collections, by the productions of the vigorous and realistic sculptor, Jacopo della Quercia (1374-1438), by the paintings of Signorelli and Leonardo da Vinci, by the Platonic philosophy of the great humanists whom he met when Lorenzo the Magnificent took him into his house, by the poetry of Dante, whose lofty and austere temper naturally touched his own, and by the sermons of Savonarola, which left a permanent impress on the tone of his thought, we can see that he was not a man without ancestry; in the universality of his powers, and in the very violence of his genius and its expression, he stands out as the supreme challenge of the new age of personality and freedom against the starved and stunted ideals of the immediate past; while the extraordinary complexity of his character is not without significance to one who considers how many forces had been let loose in that new age which

no one man, however great, could hope to bring into harmonious co-operation. Combining, like Milton, a stainless purity of life with the most passionate feeling for sensuous beauty, he maintained his integrity and his Hebraic zeal for righteousness amid all the fast-spreading corruption of the papal capital. When he speaks of the meaning of religious art to the artist, it is in words which might have dropped from the lips of Fra Angelico himself: "In order to represent the adored image of our Lord, it is not enough that a master should be great and able. I maintain that he must also be a man of good morals and conduct, if possible a saint, in order that the Holy Ghost may give him inspiration." Yet despite the humble and devout spirit which these words express, no man did more than he who uttered them to destroy the religious meaning of traditional Christian art. Here is the paradox of Michelangelo's character and career; he was a man of profoundly religious feeling, and yet his influence in painting no less than in architecture and sculpture made for secularisation. Impatient of limitations and control; arrogant, impulsive, and audacious; a lover of the human body, which for him was the one great revelation of the divine;* a worshipper of physical strength, which he deemed the highest manifestation of its beauty; he rejoiced to overleap the bounds of conventional restraints; to charge himself with almost impossible tasks that he might show his skill in triumphing over all their difficulties; and even in handling his favourite subject, the nude, to play tricks with anatomy to the extent of exaggerating muscular development and pushing bold-

* See, for example, one of his sonnets to Vittoria Colonna (as translated by Symonds in "The Fine Arts," p. 299):—

> "Nor hath God deigned to show Himself elsewhere
> More clearly than in human forms sublime;
> Which, since they image Him, compel my love."

ness of attitude to almost monstrous extremes. It is therefore not surprising that, vast as was the range of his powers, he was yet prevented by the essential qualities of his temperament and his genius from making even the most promising subjects the media of Christian teaching. The colossal fresco of the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel stands in respect of its motive in direct line of development from the Last Judgment in the Campo Santo at Pisa. But while this latter was imbued with the religious sentiments of its time, it is difficult to detect in Michelangelo's work the play of any distinctively Christian feeling. What trace of such feeling, we may well ask, can we anywhere find in the gestures and faces of these "exasperated giants, some victorious, some vanquished, all naked and muscular as athletes?" in this "avenging Christ with His herculean frame?" in this "terrified Virgin who cowers beside her Son?"* In such a daringly original rendering of a traditional subject the last link connecting art with Christian tradition has been broken. As a titanic achievement this "Dies Irae" is probably the greatest thing of its kind in existence. But it is simply a great picture. To regard it as a Christian interpretation of a Christian theme would be absurd.

Michelangelo neither sprang from nor did he found a school. His independence and originality kept him isolated. Raphael, on the other hand, so absorbed and so gave out influence as to become the epitome and the synthesis of all that is most characteristic in the art of his time. The darling of the papacy, he is pre-eminently the painter of the power and prestige of Rome in that great hour of its strength and pride which just preceded the bursting of the German storm. There is therefore something curiously piquant in the fact that

* Reinach, "Apollo," p. 211.

THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS

From the fresco by Raphael, in the Chamber of Signatures at the Vatican

he and Luther were born in the same year. The famous cartoon of "Christ's Appearance to His Disciples by the Lake of Galilee and the Charge to Peter," which so aroused the wrath of Ruskin, is obviously designed to support the claims of the Church. "Note," says Ruskin in his caustic commentary, "the bold fallacy—the putting *all* the Apostles there, a mere lie to serve the papal heresy of the Petric supremacy, by putting them all in the background while Peter receives the charge, and making them all witnesses to it." Even more notably the vast religious, historical, and allegorical decorations of the *stanze* and *loggie* of the Vatican, undertaken at the command of Julius II. and Leo X., have as one of their chief objects the glorification of the Roman power. This is clearly shown, directly or symbolically, in the "Coronation of Charlemagne" and the "Donation of Constantine" (both manifestoes in favour of the Hildebrandine conception of the Pope's temporal supremacy), the "Checking of Attila by Leo I.," the "Driving of Heliodorus from the Temple," the "Deliverance of Peter," the "Fire in the Borgo," and the "Triumph of the Church." At the same time the full influence of the classical revival and the humanistic enthusiasms of the leaders of the papal court are equally apparent in the "School of Athens" and the "Parnassus." Of the general spirit of Raphael's work on scriptural subjects, it may perhaps be said that at his best it exhibits a more perfect blending than can be found anywhere else in Renaissance art of real devotional feeling with a sense of beauty and consummate skill. But the union was for one happy moment only. Even in Raphael's own later productions the signs of approaching decay are unmistakable; while, save only in Venice, deterioration went on rapidly throughout Italian art after the master's death. It was

not that the painters of the decline lacked science or perception, quickness of mind or dexterity of hand. They were, on the contrary, extremely clever craftsmen, who had learned all the technical lessons of the schools, worked with astonishing dexterity in the production of their effects, and understood how to imitate the external qualities of style of their great forerunners. But the world to which they belonged knew nothing of moral idealism or lofty emotion, and thus at best there was nothing in their surroundings to inspire them with worthy aims, while the general corruption of the society about them inevitably tended to the debasement of their art. Much of their work was done for wealthy patrons for whom art had become a luxury and the means of vulgar display, and whose peculiar tastes it was, of course, their business to gratify. Vast and showy pictures on historical, mythological, and allegorical themes were in special demand—pictures grandiose in conception and bombastic in execution, but wholly wanting in nobility of purpose and depth of thought; and a common feature of these was the constant abuse of the nude, which, serenely pure in the best classic sculpture, and a subject of scientific interest in the hands of Michelangelo, was now degraded to sensual ends. Along with moral vigour and sincerity even technical vitality disappeared from art, which, like the architecture of the same period, became more and more cold, formal, and academic. Sensationalism and the love of startling effects meanwhile invaded the domain of religious art, the vicious changes in the tone and manner of which may in large measure be traced to the influences of the Counter-reformation. It is true that the movement for the purification of life which grew out of this helped greatly to check some of the most glaring evils of the time; as, for example, in the shameless use

of the nude. Cardinal Contarini, whom we remember as one of the Catholic reformers, complained that in the very temple of God, in pictures of saints, and even in altar-pieces, there were scenes clearly designed to excite lascivious desires; and so flagrant did the abuse become that the Council of Trent was compelled to take cognisance of it. But in other ways the influence of the Catholic reaction was the reverse of healthy. In its effort to recover lost ground and to re-establish its sway over men's minds, the Church gladly employed all the means at its disposal, among them art. But the work which it now inspired had nothing in common with the severe, dogmatic productions of the great mediæval painter-preachers. The aim of the artist was to stimulate the imagination and arouse the feelings of an age which had grown sceptical and jaded; and to do this he had recourse now to excessive sensibility, now to vulgar and even repulsive realism, now to a strange blending of sensuality and mysticism. His art, in a word, became theatrical. Already we see something of this spirit in Raphael's contemporary, Correggio, who handles his Christian and his pagan motives with the same luscious grace and seductive sentimentalism. But its full effect is to be found only later, as in the cheap emotionalism of such men as Guido Reni (1575-1642) and Carlo Dolci (1516-1686).

In speaking of the decline of Italian painting after Raphael's death, I made an exception in favour of Venice. There, where it developed late, art continued to flourish in all the fullness of its power down to the very close of the sixteenth century—the magnificent product of the commercial prosperity, the intellectual freedom, and the civic strength of the City of the Doges, and the marvellous embodiment of its material and social beauty, its love of pleasure and pageant, its lust

of life. Upon the splendour and charm of Venetian painting, its vitality, its variety, its wealth of radiant colour, I must not be tempted to dwell. The one thing we have to note about it is the spirit by which it was animated. Venetian painting knew nothing of mysticism, of ecstatic piety, of the trials and aspirations of the soul. The austerity and other-worldliness which for a time had been prominent elsewhere in art it had always openly repudiated. It was, in fact, thoroughly worldly and profoundly materialistic. The devotional pictures of Giovanni Bellini had indeed true religious feeling; but "from the close of the fifteenth century the Madonnas and the saints of the Venetian painters were no longer ascetic and morose persons, but beautiful young women and handsome young men, with blooming complexions and sunny hair, who loved to deck themselves with gorgeous stuffs and held life to be well worth living."* In the great decorative pictures of Carpaccio (1466-1522), full of characterisation, realism, and humour; in the work of Tintoretto, with its amazing dramatic vigour, its violent action, its romantic feeling, and its vivid contrasts of light and shade; in Veronese's love of processions and pageantry, which makes him turn even the Marriage at Cana into an immense crowded festival, we have the dominant notes of Venetian art. We have them again in its greatest master and completest representative, the mighty Titian, who, equally at home in episodes from pagan mythology and in subjects belonging to the traditional range of Christian art (in which latter he exhibits the powerful influence of the Catholic reaction), stamps everything he touches with a double impress—the impress of his own genius and the impress of the spirit of his time and place. More than any other Italian school of painting,

* Reinach, "Apollo," p. 172.

this Venetian school represents that increasing interest alike in man and in nature which came with the Renaissance; more than any other, it stands for the life of the present world and the absolute secularisation of art.

V.—RENAISSANCE ART IN GERMANY AND THE LOW COUNTRIES

Thus far I have written exclusively of Italian art as the one great and representative art of our period. Turning now to art outside Italy, I need touch upon such points only as are of special interest in connecting this particular subject with the general history of the Renaissance.

In Germany and the Low Countries painting was long under the sway of the Byzantine school, the tyranny of which was first challenged about the middle of the thirteenth century. Then art, passing from the hands of the monks into those of the laity, began to respond to the stir of secular life, to free itself from the restraints of the cloister, and even to seek fresh material in romantic legend. Religious subjects none the less continued to provide the chief part of the painter's stock-in-trade, though in his treatment of these he differed considerably from his Italian contemporaries; a love of nature and of homely and familiar detail, a wholesome feeling for common things, and a tendency to a coarse kind of truthfulness being among the salient features of his work. The characteristic qualities of German, Flemish, and Dutch art are thus clearly indicated. Exceptions there were, of course; but, speaking in general terms, we may say that these northern masters had from the first a well-marked leaning towards actual life and the world of everyday fact; that, pious and sentimental as they often were, they

were rarely inspired by mystical passion; and that the romantic bias of northern genius was shown in their free use not only of the commonplace, but even of the grotesque in the handling of sacred themes. No one would seek to deny the genuine religious fervour of the Van Eycks; of Martin Schongauer (1450-88); of Hans Memling (1430-94), whose pictures are indeed conspicuous for their devout feeling; of Memling's master, Rogier van der Weyden (1400-64), whose sombre and gloomy spirit finds expression in the agony of tortured saints and the sufferings of Christ; of Quentin Matsys (1466-1530), whose frequent vulgarity of detail does not obscure the sincerity of his emotion. Yet, comparing the work even of these men with that of the greatest Italian religious painters, we can hardly fail to perceive both their larger intellectual independence and their relative want of idealising power. The "tendency to give poetry to realities rather than to realise a conventional ideal is prominent throughout the whole course of Flemish art," writes Reinach; and what he says about Flemish art may be fairly extended to northern art in general. "Painters were obliged to paint sacred pictures, Virgins, angels, and martyrs, because their clients asked for these; but how clearly they show that all of them, even Memling, would gladly have painted anything else! The things that interest them, that they study and render most lovingly, are figures of donors, rich stuffs, distant glimpses of landscape. They are never so great as when they escape from the bondage of the given theme."* The common practice, here just alluded to, of introducing the portraits of donors, patrons, and wealthy burghers in pictures of the Holy Family and similar scenes, is a curious illustration of the downright realistic character

* "Apollo," p. 227.

of this northern art. In many ways, as will be seen, such art exhibits the workings of the practical and positive spirit which found its principal expression in Protestantism.

We are thus brought to a question of primary interest in this part of our study—that of the general influence of the Reformation on art. To all forms of ecclesiastical art Protestantism was necessarily hostile. It is true that in this matter there were differences of opinion among the leaders. Luther himself defended the use of art for devotional purposes, both because it aided the memory and because it helped to a vivid imaginative realisation of incidents of sacred story. "If it is not sinful, but good and holy, that I should have Christ's image in my heart," he said, "why should it be sinful for me to have it in my eyes?" On the other hand, Zwingli and his followers denounced all religious art in unmeasured terms as an invention of Anti-Christ —"the Lord," they declared, "had commanded to preach the gospel, not to paint it"; and the Helvetian Confession of Faith contained an express denunciation of all images as idols. On the whole, the judgment of the reformers went with the Swiss party rather than with Luther, and it was their uncompromising spirit which became the controlling influence in defining the unfortunate attitude of Protestantism towards art. We need not make too much of the disgraceful outbursts of fanaticism which occasionally occurred; as when, according to the report given by Erasmus to Pirkheimer, a frenzied mob laid violent hands on the treasures of the Basel churches, obliterated with whitewash all the paintings which could not be removed, smashed all the sacred images, and committed to the flames everything that would burn. Such iconoclastic madness, specifically condemned by Luther, was the inevitable product

of the angry passions of an age in which, as we saw in an earlier chapter, there was no hope for counsels of moderation on one or the other side. It is not with such passing gusts of unreasoning fury that we have here to reckon, but with the bearings of reformed Christianity upon the evolution of art at large. By its formal repudiation of the use of beauty in the service of religion, Protestantism practically destroyed ecclesiastical art. Of the disastrous consequences which this ill-advised procedure entailed upon its own destinies we have not here to speak. We have only to note that in this way æsthetic genius, now completely liberated from sacerdotal control, gained absolute freedom in the treatment of sacred subjects, while at the same time it was greatly encouraged, indeed almost driven, to seek fresh secular channels for its expression.

The history of the immediate influence of Protestantism upon painting is not very interesting. Among the most important artists, the German, Lucas Cranach (1472-1553), shows it most conspicuously. Cranach was an intimate friend of Luther and Melanchthon, and in many of his church pictures he gives his compositions a distinctly dogmatic and polemical turn. Thus, for example, in his great altar-piece in the Stadtkirche at Weimar, he depicts Christ on the cross with the blood flowing from His side, while John the Baptist directs the attention of Luther, Melanchthon, and the painter himself to the suffering Saviour as representing the work of redemption. Here, clearly, we have an attempt to make art the embodiment of the central Protestant doctrine of the Atonement. In the productions of two much greater men, the spirit of the reformed religion, though not so pronounced, is still unmistakable. Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), the most famous of German masters, painted and etched at Nürnberg at a time when

that city was the centre of German humanism, and the impulses of the intellectual revival must be counted among the formative factors in the development of his art. It was during his later years, however, that, though he never severed his connection with the Roman communion, his sympathy with the Reformation became pronounced. Thus, while his vast allegorical picture of the "Adoration of the Trinity" is executed on conventional lines and is thoroughly mediæval in its balanced representation of the Church and the Empire, his late masterpieces of the "Four Apostles" (St. Peter, St. John, St. Mark, and St. Paul) is evidently inspired by interest in the return of Christianity to its apostolic sources, the appended texts from Luther's translation of the Epistles serving to underscore the artist's meaning. His sacred woodcuts also show Protestant tendencies in their free treatment of their subjects, and especially of their figures. In his younger contemporary, Hans Holbein (1497-1543), the power of Protestantism is even more marked. Detailed examination of his religious pictures, which are not numerous, would show this in the sound common sense, the intellectual solidity, and the homely realism by which they are characterised, while occasionally, as in some of the illustrations to Luther's Bible, and in drawings of the Passion in which Christ's judges, accusers, and executioners are represented under the guise of pope, monks, and priests, the dogmatic purpose of the artist becomes aggressive. We have not at the moment anything to do with the varied output of both Dürer and Holbein on other than sacred subjects. Two points suggested by their work in general may still, however, be emphasised. In the first place, there is its essentially Teutonic character. Protestant in temper as they were, they were as Germans nearer in certain ways to the Middle Ages

than their Italian contemporaries; for along with their downright and practical temper and their lack of mystical passion, there is a large infusion in the productions of both of them of the weird, the grotesque, the superstitious, and the sentimental. We see this in "The Knight, Death, and the Lady," and the "Melancholia" of the one, and in the "Dance of Death" of the other. Secondly, we should recognise the significance of the immense development of etching and engraving not in the hands of these two masters only, but in northern art at large. In this we have, socially considered, a further extension of the influence of the oil painting. In Italy, as we have seen, painting as it ceased to be mainly ecclesiastical tended to become a mere luxury of the very rich. It is a sign of the different spirit bred by Protestantism among the northern peoples that by means of etching and engraving even the greatest artists—even men like Dürer and Rembrandt—appealed to the masses as well as to the wealthy and cultivated few; and in this case, again, the taste of the public affected the work of the artist. Art shared with religion in the democratic influences of which Protestantism was at once part cause and part effect.

The difference between Counter-reformation and Reformation in their respective bearings on art may be further illustrated from the contrast presented by the two supreme painters of the seventeenth century—the Flemish Rubens (1577-1649) and the Dutch Rembrandt (1616-69). Both these great masters were enormously industrious, prolific, and versatile; both covered almost the entire range of artistic motives possible at their time, producing portraits and landscapes, allegorical compositions, and pictures on subjects from history, religion, mythology, and social life. But Rubens belonged to the Spanish Netherlands, where the spirit of

the Counter-reformation was very strong, and of that spirit he is in his religious productions the most brilliant interpreter. Ruskin speaks of him as a man "without any perceptible traces of a soul." The want of soul, the absence of real spirituality, is a conspicuous characteristic of his work. He is marvellously effective; but in a florid and sensational way. His religious paintings are, in fact, often vulgar, not on account of any triviality in their conception or of the introduction of commonplace details, but because they are over-emphatic and theatrical; as in the famous "Crucifixion" and the equally famous "Descent from the Cross," the one in the Museum, the other in the cathedral, at Antwerp. Thus Rubens exhibits, more fully than any other painter, the spirit which the Counter-reformation had brought into art. The tone of Rembrandt's sacred pictures, on the other hand, is thoroughly and unmistakably Protestant. Their downright, vigorous naturalism and freedom from convention betray their inspiration. In his "Descent from the Cross," for instance, there are many grotesque touches, and the Walloon costumes of the figures produce a strange effect; but here, as elsewhere, the artist's touch of familiarity and his homely truth bring his subjects very near indeed to our imagination and sympathies.

In Germany art was early swamped by Italian influences, and about the middle of the sixteenth century ceased to nourish itself from the soil of national life, gave itself up to imitation of foreign models, and thus, becoming devitalised and academic, passed rapidly into decline. Something of the same fate later overtook the more ambitious forms of art in the Netherlands, though the power of a few great masters saved even these for a time from complete destruction. The really living developments of northern art after this time must,

however, be sought not in paintings on a grand scale and on religious and historical themes, but rather in little pictures for private houses and public halls, containing portraits, landscapes, domestic interiors, and transcripts from ordinary life. It was in this realistic work, and particularly in what is known as genre-painting, that much of the best genius of the north in the later Renaissance period found its expression, and it is noteworthy that while such realistic work was a thoroughly characteristic product of the spirit of the Low Countries in general, it developed less rapidly and less successfully in Catholic Flanders (and this notwithstanding the prominence of David Teniers) than in Protestant Holland. Dutch art was born along with Dutch freedom in that great hour when the people of Holland finally broke the yoke and discarded the religion of their Spanish oppressors; and whatever else may be said about it, either in praise or in blame, this at least must be said—that it has all the vitality and the meaning which only a genuine national art can ever possess. It is not an ideal art; not an art of high emotion or intense passion; it has no spirituality; it is little concerned with the great things of religion, or history, or experience. It is just the art of nature in its common aspects, of homely people and their doings, of life as it is lived day by day through quiet uneventful years. In this art the realism which had long been struggling elsewhere for separate existence at length becomes entirely independent. Seeking its themes and inspiration in the range of simple fact, this Dutch art then has its importance as representing in its peculiar and fruitful fashion one phase of that general return of the mind and interests of men to the world and reality which we have found a chief factor in the movements of the Renaissance as a whole.

CHAPTER VIII

The Renaissance in Literature

I.—GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RENAISSANCE LITERATURE

I HAVE now to outline the development of literature during the period of the Renaissance, and, as in the preceding sketch of art, so again here, we are to concern ourselves not with technical details, or with individual men as such, or with the lasting value of what they did, but with general movements and their meanings. What we have, then, to undertake is not a history, but an epitome, and the aim of this epitome must be to exhibit the connection between literature and other activities of the time. That Renaissance literature, like Renaissance art, is charged with all the passion and energy of the great age out of which it sprang is a fact too familiar to every reader, even to the English reader who never travels beyond his own language, to need repeated emphasis. It is with the special ways in which literature was affected by the influences which we have been considering that we now have to do.

A natural plan would be to follow the main lines of literary evolution as we previously followed the course of classical scholarship, from Italy, the cradle of humanism, across the Alps to France, and thence to England. But while this plan would doubtless have its advantages, we shall, I think, economise space and best subserve our purpose by dealing with our subject under

the headings rather of movements than of countries. It is not primarily with Italian literature, or with French literature, or with English literature that our business now lies. It is with the qualities and tendencies of Renaissance literature in general. In taking the proposed course we shall find that all the literatures of the new age have many points of resemblance one with another. Products of the powerful secularising spirit of the time, they are all alike characterised by reaction from sacerdotalism and the cloistral temper, by their wide interest in the present world, by their ardent pursuit of fresh experience and their absorbing delight in life and beauty. Whatever else this Renaissance literature is, it is certainly a literature of the lay mind, of free inquiry, of awakened sensibilities, of intellectual emancipation and expansion. Impulses long checked, desires long banned, find full expression in it, and it is everywhere quickened by the fertilising ideas by which men's imaginations were filled. It is, moreover, an embodiment not only of man's newly stirred interest in the outer world, but also of his newly stirred interest in himself. The individualism of the age is one of its persistent notes. Once more, almost universally in its forms, often in its content and spirit, it reveals the influences of the new learning and the revival of classical antiquity—influences which were indeed so profound and far-reaching, for both good and evil, that from the purely artistic point of view they may be justly, as they are popularly, regarded as the chief factors in literary development. Inspired by the same interests and shaped by the same forces, the literatures of the Renaissance thus present, as we should expect, many features in common. Yet because, broadly viewed, such literatures are fundamentally European, they do not therefore cease to be Italian, French, and English. Essential similarities

thus, as we should also expect, coexist with many differences, and as these differences were due to differences in national character, situation, social and moral conditions, and the varying power and relationships of the impulses involved, they will prove to be by no means the least important point in the comparative inquiry which we have now to undertake.

II.—THE SECULARISATION OF LITERATURE

It has been pointed out that the development of a large body of miscellaneous and entirely secular literature was one of the principal manifestations of the working of the Renaissance spirit. That there was no secular literature during the Middle Ages is not, of course, implied. A good deal existed, as especially in the aristocratic *chansons de gestes* and *romans*, and in the more popular songs, ballads, and *fabliaux*. But, on the whole, and even outside the field of directly religious effort, literature was still hampered by theology and encumbered by scholastic metaphysics. Deflected by these, it lost itself too often in the dreary wastes of didacticism, allegory, abstractions, and personifications. Its gradual emergence from these under the influence of the tendencies which culminated in the Renaissance, represents the return to life and nature, and the corresponding growth of an interest in art as art. Its complete secularisation meant its final liberation from ecclesiastical and scholastic control, its escape from the atmosphere and the prepossessions of cloister and classroom, the assertion of its right to independent existence, its claim to absolute freedom in its treatment of its two great subjects—the world and man. Thus, for example, story-literature in clerical hands had been an appendage to the literature of edification; moral tags (as even in

the "Gesta Romanorum") had been freely used to justify amusement; epical narrative had been continually burdened with allegory. When Boccaccio and Chaucer wrote tales which frankly depended upon their interest as tales—as records of incidents, transcripts from the human comedy, or excursions into the wonderland of romance—they stood out as pioneers of that coming literature which by its varied dealings with fact and fancy was to appeal directly to the imagination and sympathies of its readers. It will be seen that to a certain extent the history of literature paralleled that of art; but for various reasons literature gained a fullness of freedom which for the time being art was unable to attain.

Conspicuous among the many illustrations of this secularisation of literature is the establishment of the modern form of drama. Whatever traditions of the ancient theatre may have survived the disintegration of the Roman Empire, it seems certain that these can have had little or nothing to do with the beginnings of the drama in mediæval Europe. That drama was a direct offshoot from religious ceremonial. It arose in the first instance out of the rich symbolic liturgy of the mediæval Church by the gradual dramatisation of important incidents, especially those connected with Easter and Christmas, commemorated in the services of the calendar. In its original form of liturgical mystery, it was, in fact, an organic part of such services, and thus we are speaking without the slightest extravagance when we say that the first stage of mediæval Europe was the altar, and the first actors the priests engaged in celebrating the mass. The expansion of this liturgical mystery was necessarily followed in due course by its separation from the ritual and its removal from the church; and, ultimately, a great religious drama evolved

out of it, the subjects of which were taken from the Old and the New Testaments and the lives of the saints, and the central purpose of which was to educate the illiterate people in the truths of their religion. As a means of securing a concrete and vivid representation of sacred things, the growth of this religious drama, therefore, falls into line with the development of religious painting, stained-glass windows, and (as, for instance, in the occasional use of tableaux) other external aids to faith. The substitution of the vernacular language for the ecclesiastical Latin originally employed, and the displacement—which, however, for a time went on very slowly—of clerical by lay actors, are signs of the encroachment of secular influences upon a domain which, to begin with, was entirely ecclesiastical. Already popular in many parts of the Continent, these mysteries and miracle plays were imported into England after the Norman Conquest; the earliest play performed in this country of which any record has been preserved, being a "Ludus de S. Katherina," which was represented at Dunstable at the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century. A hundred years later such representations were common all over the country. But the great age of the English religious drama dawned with the fourteenth century, when Corpus Christi plays, as they were called from the season of their performance at the great festival of that name, became popular in many of our larger towns. One curious feature in their development at this time merits attention. From the outset the tendency of the religious drama had been towards expansion by the continual incorporation of more and more fresh matter with the few original themes. In England this tendency resulted in the production of immense sequences or cycles of plays—Collective Mysteries, as they are some-

times termed—which, beginning with the Creation and ending with Doomsday, provided a fairly systematic treatment, in terms of the current theology, of the central problems of sin and salvation.* As these plays had now passed into the hands of the trade-guilds of the different towns, the actual clerical monopoly of the drama was completely destroyed. Many other influences were meanwhile at work helping to widen the breach between the Church and the drama. All this is significant. But still more significant is the tendency of the religious play to outrun its first dogmatic, and still stated, purpose, by amplification on the purely dramatic side. The humorous wrangling of Cain and his boy, and of Noah and his wife, and, most of all, the two Shepherd Plays in the Wakefield cycle—which are simply rough, north-country, rustic farces, very slightly connected with their matrix—show how, even while still working within the narrow frame of prescribed subject-matter, these old playwrights and actors began to feel the human possibilities of what they had in hand, and were instinctively seeking a way towards a genuine kind of drama. Their experiments thus remind us of the efforts of some of the Italian painters towards realistic expansion under the cover of sacred themes.

This religious drama had a long history. It maintained its vogue in France till nearly the middle of the sixteenth century; it developed in Italy into the more artistic form of the fifteenth century *rappresentazioni sacre,* and in Spain into the *autos sacramentales,* of which some hundreds of examples were provided by the prolific pens of Lope de la Vega and Calderon; in both

* Four of these cycles have come down to us complete: the Chester cycle of 25 plays, the Coventry of 42, the Wakefield of 31, and the York of 48. The great Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau is our modern survival and representative of this mediæval religious drama.

Germany and England it persisted well on into the period of the Reformation, the theory that Protestantism was directly antagonistic to it being a mistake. Meanwhile another stage in dramatic evolution had been marked by the rise of the morality play, which was simply the translation of didactic allegory into dramatic form. This fact is itself enough to show that in origin the morality was as mediæval as the mystery. Yet various points of difference between the two classes are suggestive. In the first place, while both were vehicles of the teachings of the Church on questions connected with man's salvation, the mystery, as M. Jusserand has admirably said, represented the more popular religious thought of the middle ages, while the morality expounded its scholastic philosophy. Secondly, the morality indicates, in a most interesting way, the movement of the drama towards human experience and the growth of the element of individuality. The mystery had dramatised sacred history, and had presented the teachings of the Church indirectly through this. In the morality doctrine was turned directly into dramatic form, and the bearings of the truths involved were enforced by the action and dialogue of characters, who were indeed personifications of virtues and vices, but in whom the spectator might well perceive enlarged types of the humanity of which he was himself a part. That at its best—as in "Everyman," for example—the morality tended to bring the drama down towards the plane of actual life cannot, I think, be denied. Thus, though it is true that in its later developments it often became hopelessly pedantic, it is also true that in other cases, as the human element gained ground at the expense of the abstractions, and the personified qualities became more and more sharply individualised, it passed insensibly into comedy, being indeed one of the affluents

by which early comedy was fed. Its use for other than its original purposes is also an interesting feature of its history. In the troubled times of the Reformation it was employed by both Catholics and Protestants as a controversial instrument. It was also turned to the service of the new learning, such a play, for instance, as the "Interlude of the Four Elements"—the earliest of the kind that has come down to us—being not a dramatised sermon or homily, but a lecture on physical science and its value, in the shape of a drama in which Natura Naturata, Studious Desire, and Humanity are the chief speakers. A significant detail of the play is the reference in it to the discovery of America.

The early history of the modern European drama thus shows that the rise of the regular secular drama in the sixteenth century was not so sudden an occurrence as is sometimes supposed. The oft-repeated theory that the origin of modern comedy and tragedy has to be sought entirely in "the study and imitation of classical plays in schools and Universities"* is quite disproved by the fact that under its pre-secular forms a steady movement towards the secularisation of the drama is apparent long before the influences of the classical revival began to count. Yet it would not be easy to exaggerate the stimulating and shaping power of such influences in the subsequent course of the European stage. In general, as we have seen, the classical revival gave an enormous impetus to the spread of the secular spirit; and of that spirit the new drama was one expression. In particular, it provided the rudimentary drama with much-needed guidance in respect of technique and form. To this latter point we will return presently. In the meanwhile we have only to record the final stage of the secular evolution of the drama in the definite estab-

* Henry Morley, "English Plays," p. 2.

lishment of regular comedy and tragedy. In Italy comedy may be said to begin with Cardinal Bibbiena's "La Calandria" (written probably about 1490, though not performed till much later), Machiavelli's "Mandragola" (1512), and the five comedies of Ariosto; tragedy (freeing itself from the *rappresentazioni sacre*) with Tassoni's "Sofonisba" (1515). In France the foundations of the new tragedy and the new comedy alike were laid by Étienne Jodelle, with "Cléopâtre" (1552), in the one case, and "Eugène" (same date) in the other. Real English comedy begins with Nicholas Udall's "Roister Doister" (*circa* 1550), and John Still's "Gammer Gurton's Needle" (*circa* 1566); real English tragedy with the "Gorboduc" of Sackville and Norton (1561-62). Thus, in a type of art which had grown up in the service of theology and had long been justified by its doctrinal utility, men now sought humour and passion, the interest of action and character, beauty of form and style.

III.—THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUALISM IN LITERATURE

In these pages it has often become apparent that the spread of the secular spirit during the period of the Renaissance was closely associated with the development of the sense of individuality, and ample proof has thus been provided of Burckhardt's statement, quoted at the outset, that the awakening of personality was the great sign of the new time. Additional proof is now furnished by Renaissance literature. Mediæval anonymity, upon which we remarked in our introductory chapter, disappears; the individual factor comes into full play; the strong impress of idiosyncrasy and specific experience is everywhere conspicuous in the work produced.

The expansion of personality must be considered in the broadest possible way. It meant much more than the phrase might seem at first to connote. As man's great aim was now at all costs to be himself, it meant self-realisation, and this in turn implied the widening of the area of experience, more varied contact with men and things, increasing flexibility and breadth of outlook. It meant, therefore, on the one hand, a deepening of interest in selfhood and its shifting phases of thought and feeling, and a growth of what we are accustomed to call self-consciousness or subjectivity. It meant equally on the other hand a corresponding deepening of interest in the characters and doings of other people, for which reason the establishment of the "cult of the ego" was accompanied by ever-extending curiosity concerning whatever belongs to the life of man. These are some aspects of the evolution of individuality in an age which had discovered at once both the inner and the outer world; and it is worth while to note that the striking freshness of Renaissance literature is, in large measure, the result rather of this new-found freedom of personal expression than of the actual originality of the ideas expressed.

To illustrate the individualism of that literature in detail would be almost tantamount to writing its history. This obviously cannot be attempted here. But a few outstanding features may be indicated.

To the English reader, whose ideas on the subject are naturally coloured by his familiarity with the Shakespearean drama, it may cause some surprise to learn that one of the most conspicuous characteristics of the European literature of the Renaissance in general is its prevailing egotism. It is, on the whole, the production of men who are immensely concerned with themselves. A careful student of one division of its history,

Mr. Arthur Tilley, has specially noted this intimately personal quality in the literature of the French Renaissance. That literature, he points out, is essentially the literature of self-portraiture; its writers "talk about themselves not because they think they are interesting to others, but because they are supremely interested in themselves"; he calls attention to the fact that "there is hardly a work of the sixteenth century, however impersonal in form, which is not full of information as to the life and character of the writer"; and he lays stress upon the autobiographical material, not only in the lyrical poetry of men like Marot, Du Bellay, and Ronsard, but also in such nominally objective books as Rabelais' "Pantagruel" and the "Heptameron" of the Queen of Navarre.* The astonishing vogue of the personal memoir in the French literature of the time, and of autobiographies (of which those of Cellini and Cardan may be cited as examples) in Italian literature, is also noteworthy. Most of these memoirs and autobiographies were mainly occupied with external facts. But a strong current of pure subjectivity had also been set flowing through European literature, the themes of which were thus occasionally furnished not by outer facts, but by inner experiences. Dante's autopsychographical "Vita Nuova" stands in the forefront of this literature of confessional utterance, but it is commonly recognised that the first influential exponent of the mood of introspection was Petrarch, in whose sonnets and *canzonieri* the element of personal passion is so prominent that he has even been described as the prototype of Rousseau and the real father of the modern literature of self-analysis and self-delineation.† Petrarch's influence upon European poetry was enor-

* "Literature of the French Renaissance," ii. 315.

† Garnett, "History of Italian Literature," p. 63.

mous, and if among our English sonneteers some, like Spenser in his "Amoretti," made lyrical verse the medium of genuine self-expression, while with others, among them perhaps Shakespeare, the sonnet-sequence was only a dramatic device, still, in the one case as in the other, and whether the feelings were real or feigned, the dominant interest was provided by the complexities and conflicts of the emotional life. The emergence of the essay—the prose analogue of the lyric—in the hands of Montaigne and Bacon must also be remarked. The rambling gossip of the one, and the "dispersed meditations" of the other, belong to the literature of direct self-expression.

Meanwhile literature responded as readily to the impulses bred of that widening contact with general human life which, as I have shown, was only another aspect of Renaissance individualism. Here, again, Dante is the pioneer, for while the plan and ideas of his "Comedy" are entirely mediæval, the "power and richness shown in his descriptions of human nature in every shape and attitude"* anticipate a later time. Growing interest in man as man, and especially (a significant detail) in strong, outstanding personalities, gave immense stimulus to the literature of biography, the popularity of which may be compared with that of the portrait in painting. This was particularly the case in Italy, where not only innumerable lives of individuals (like Boccaccio's "Life of Dante," which led the way), but also voluminous collections (like Vasari's "Lives of the Painters," from which we have more than once quoted) bore testimony to the power of the current taste. But we must also remember that this interest in man as man found embodiment in imaginative no less than in historic forms. For reasons into which we must not

* Burckhardt, "The Renaissance in Italy," Part IV., chap. iv.

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now pause to enter, it made comparatively little headway in prose fiction, which, from the point of view of personality, as well as of art, was greatly retarded in its growth. But it was the inspiring motive of the new drama. That drama moved along the lines indicated by the morality-play, from types and abstractions to individualities, and it was to the keen sense of individuality, of the varieties of experience, of the boundless possibilities of human nature for good and evil, that it made its appeal.

Twice already in previous chapters, and a third time just now, I have had occasion to refer to one of the greatest writers in Renaissance literature—the French essayist Montaigne, whom I have described as "the very incarnation of the inquisitive temper of his age." Representative in this sense, he is also representative on account of the absolutely personal quality of his writing; and if I return to this point once again for a moment, it is not so much because he was admittedly the typical egotist of the Renaissance, as it is because it is most important that we should appreciate the real nature and bearings of his egotism. More than any of his contemporaries, he combined in himself the two phases of individualism at which we have glanced—intense interest in himself and intense interest in everything connected with man. Individualism is the key-note of his "Essays." To the last degree self-engrossed, he is for himself the pivot of a universe of infinite variety and inexhaustible fascination. "It is myself I portray"; "I look within myself, and have no business but with myself"; "my book is consubstantial with its author"; "my book and I march together and keep one pace"; "all the world may know me by my book"—in such terms he openly proclaims his constant pre-occupation with himself, his own life, character, experiences, aims, opinions. Indivi-

dualism is also the key-note of his moral teaching. "The greatest thing in the world is for a man to know that he is his own." True to this underlying principle, he throws the utmost emphasis upon the value of whatever a man can build into the fabric of his life to its amplification and enrichment. There is nothing ascetic about him; he is not afraid of experience, nor will he shirk it. Yet none the less—and this is the obverse of the same thought—he draws the sharpest distinction between man and his circumstances—the things which stand outside him; between the mere trappings and accidents of life and life in its true essence; between our stage costume and our skin. "There is nothing so goodly and so lawful as to play the man well and duly. Of all the infirmities we have, the most savage is to despise our being. The true husbandry is to know how to enjoy it. And as I now perceive my life to be short in time, I will strive to extend it in weight." The wisdom of pure egotism could hardly go farther. Montaigne's very inconsistencies—and they were innumerable: his habit of taking one view of a subject to-day and another view to-morrow; his undogmatic temper; the suppleness of his judgment; his far-reaching scepticism; his uncompromising honesty of dealing with himself as well as with the people about him—all these things were only so many manifestations of a marvellously alert and flexible mind allowing itself at all times absolute freedom of play. Yet such preoccupation with himself and the conduct of his own life was, as I have hinted, only one aspect of Montaigne's individualism. The other aspect of it is to be found in his wide and varied contact with the world, in the avidity with which he tested life on all sides, in his insatiable curiosity, in his tolerance and comprehensive sympathy. In the words of one of his favourite mottoes—a phrase from Terence—he was

human, and nothing human did he deem foreign to him. Hence his fondness for dwelling upon "diversity" as "the most constant quality in human nature"; his love of travel; his devotion to history, which in a marvellously modern spirit he studied as indeed the "natural history" of man. It is not paradoxical to say that his interest in himself was at bottom an interest in himself as a specimen of mankind. His fundamental revolt against authority and the dead hand of the past was yet another expression of the individualism which was the basis and the governing principle of all the living and all the thinking of this "first modern man."

IV.—THE CLASSIC REVIVAL AND LITERATURE

While considering the liberalising tendencies of humanism, we learned how much the spread of the secular spirit and the development of individualism were stimulated in the new generation by the contact of its mind with the mind of classical antiquity. As a factor in the intellectual and moral evolution of literature, the rebirth of classical antiquity was therefore of marked importance. As a factor in its artistic evolution, however, its importance is even greater. So obviously, indeed, was the literature of the Renaissance fashioned upon the models furnished by Greece and Rome, so much did it depend upon these for inspiration, guidance, and precedent, that historians of narrow outlook have made the mistake of assuming that the revival of literature was entirely the result of the revival of learning. Even the brief survey which we have taken in this book of the general movements which combined in the transformation of life during the period of the Renaissance will have sufficed to expose the radical unsoundness of this view. Yet, as we shall see, the direct influence of

classicism upon the forms and methods of literature was so profound as to some extent to account for, though not, of course, to excuse it.

That influence is shown at once and most broadly in the fact that literature now came to be regarded as an art, and that men began to concern themselves about the principles and rules of composition. Elsewhere, as we have noted, the classical revival fostered the mood of inquiry and criticism, and the extension of this mood to art was naturally followed by the growth of a considerable body of literature dealing immediately with literature and with questions of technique. This did not indeed occur in the earlier years of the revival, when men were too enthusiastic over their recovered treasures and too impatient of matters of detail in their enjoyment of them to pause to analyse, weigh, and consider. But a race of more sober scholars succeeded that of the early passionate humanists, and then criticism began in earnest. The "Ars Poetica" of Vida—Pope's "immortal Vida, on whose honour'd brow the poet's bays and critic's laurel grow"—published in 1527, was the first noteworthy treatise of the kind. This shows the powerful influence of Horace, whose own "Ars Poetica" was at the moment the great textbook of criticism. A little later Aristotle's "Poetics" came to the front and was soon the standard authority in literary discussion. It is certainly one of the most curious coincidences in literary history that the dictatorship of Aristotle in poetry should have been firmly established at the very time when his long supremacy in philosophy was being fatally undermined. Italy played the principal part in the literature of criticism during the sixteenth century, after which the leadership in opinion passed to France. Here already the ground had been broken, especially by the members of the famous *Pléiade*, a brotherhood of

seven sanguine men with Ronsard at their head, who about the middle of the sixteenth century banded themselves together for the reform of the French language and of French poetry. They had had their forerunners, but it was by them that the foundations of French criticism were permanently laid. Their principal manifesto was Du Bellay's treatise, "La Deffense et Illustration de la Langue Françoyse," published in 1549. In this the extreme classicism of the school is very clearly revealed, for the writer breaks absolutely with the earlier traditions of French poetry, "and proclaims without reservation that the only good models are those of Greece and Rome, and the country which has first been quickened by the Renaissance spirit—Italy."* The distinct classical bias which was thus given to French literature is historically significant. From this time onward critical literature developed rapidly in France, and with it the influence of Aristotle; though it should be noted that the literary principles of the great Greek thinker were now as much perverted by his disciples as his philosophical theories had formerly been by the schoolmen. It was about the middle of the sixteenth century also that criticism definitely emerged in England; and in English treatises on the formal aspects of literature—as in Webbe's "Discourse of English Poesie" (1586), and Puttenham's "Arte of English Poetrie" (1589), and Sidney's "Apologie for Poetrie" (*circa* 1581), to mention three of the most important examples—the paramount influences are those of the classics and Italy. But our native playwrights and poets were, on the whole, impatient of the schoolmaster and his counsels of restraint, and critical theory in England had much less to do with the actual making of literature than in either of the great literary countries of the Continent.

* Tilley, "The Literature of the French Renaissance," i. 313.

Concurrently with the growth of interest in literature as an art went the rapid evolution of literary forms; and as it was to the masterpieces of Greece and Rome that the men of the new age turned for their rules of judgment and standards of taste, so it was in these also that they sought precedent and pattern. The shaping influences of classicism are thus everywhere apparent, though in varying degrees, in the development of literature on the technical side.

This is evident if we consider the general history of style. The absurd attempts of such men as Gabriel Harvey, Webbe, and Stanyhurst to reconstruct English prosody upon the strict model of Greek and Latin quantitative metre—attempts which for a time almost seduced Spenser—now excite amusement only; but put into their proper perspective they prove at least that classical studies had awakened English writers to the need of reform in the manner and diction of their poetry. That reform Wyatt and Surrey did much to carry out, with the help of Italian and French teachers who had themselves sat at the feet of the ancients. The beginnings of modern English poetry are thus closely connected with humanism. All over Europe about the same time we see vernacular prose struggling to lift itself to the high level of the classical tongues. Men who had spent their days and nights over the pages of the Latin masters, and had felt the lucidity and elegance of what they read, made laborious efforts to impart something of the same distinctive qualities to the rude and shapeless materials with which they had to work. Careful study was now accordingly given to rhetorical technique; writers came to seek style and to pursue it apart from any question of its value in respect of the things they wanted to say. An intemperate enthusiasm for mere form, an inordinate devotion to figure and phrase,

and many extraordinary experiments in the improvement of native speech were the result. We see this in the strained and overloaded language of the French *rhétoriqueurs,* in the reform programme of the *Pléiade,* and in Du Bellay's contention that the French tongue could acquire real excellence and polish only by deliberate imitation of Greek and Latin models. We see it in the *alto estilo* of the Spanish Guevara, which came into England through the translations of Berners and North. We see it in the florid mannerisms of Sidney's "Arcadia"; in the elaborate artifices of Lyly's "Euphues"; in the fashionable Italianism of the courtiers, the pedantry of the schoolmaster, and the grandiloquence of the fantastical Spaniard in "Love's Labour's Lost."

The development of the more important forms of literature during the period of the Renaissance was, like the evolution of the sense of style in general, largely the consequence of classical inspiration and example. A considerable portion of the history of Renaissance literature is, in fact, concerned with the revival and adaptation of ancient types.

Thus, for instance, while ample room had been found in mediæval literature for ridicule, scorn, invective, and reproof, the satiric spirit had expressed itself in such forms as were at hand and already popular for other purposes; the form of allegory, for instance, in Langland's "Piers Plowman"; the form of beast-story in "Reinecke Fuchs." Such miscellaneous vehicles of satire, as I need scarcely say, have continued to be used in all literatures down to our own day. But at the time of the Renaissance the satire evolved as a regular specific type; and the sources of this formal satire, as written by such men as Ariosto in Italy, Regnier in France, Gascoigne, Hall, and Donne in England, are to be

sought in the works of the Roman satirists, Horace, Juvenal, and Persius.

The history of another humanistic revival which for a time enjoyed enormous vogue—the pastoral—is in the range of its developments and influence at once more varied and more interesting. The pastoral poem originated in the actual folk-songs of the Dorian Greeks, and was thus at the outset, like our own ballads, entirely popular in character. Its formal beginnings date from the "Idylls" of the Syracusan poet Theocritus, about 270 B.C. These "Idylls," or "little pictures," are not sham pastorals; there is true feeling for nature in them, and plenty of fidelity to the facts they purport to describe. But, products of the sophisticated Alexandrian age, they are by no means free from the prevailing taint of artificiality; and in the work of those who followed and imitated Theocritus this taint spread, till artifice finally destroyed reality. Thus the pastoral became a pure literary convention, cultivated by scholars who were far more concerned about the form than about the substance of their writing; it no longer dealt with the life of actual shepherds; everything was idealised in it out of all semblance to its supposed original; homely detail vanished before idyllic sentimentalism and the refinements of academic taste; natural scenery and rural manners were displaced by the landscape of Arcadia and the simplicity of the Golden Age. Such was the conventional form which pastoral poetry assumed in the "Bucolica" of Vergil. Such was the conventional form which it assumed under the influences of classical enthusiasm among the humanists of the Renaissance. In this revival, though Theocritus was not neglected, Vergil was the principal model; and thus the modern pastoral in its origin was but the imitation of an imitation, at two removes from reality. At first even the Latin hexa-

meter was adopted, as by both Dante and Petrarch, and this tradition was carried on by later Italian humanists, who, as we shall presently see, were so devoted to the ancient tongues as to despise vernacular verse. Among these there is one who on account of the extraordinary European vogue of his "Eclogues" deserves special mention—Giovanni Battista Spagnuoli, better known under his pen-name of Mantuanus. Shakespeare's reference to him as the "good old Mantuan" in "Love's Labour's Lost" (iv. 2) gives the English reader a nodding acquaintance with him, and also serves to indicate the extent of his reputation. In England, as on the Continent, his poems were held in the highest esteem among the learned; in this country, according to sixteenth century evidence, they were even preferred to Vergil's "Bucolica," * while their use as a regular Latin textbook in English schools explains Shakespeare's familiarity with them. Great as was the impulse which they gave to the same form of literature in France and England, however, pastoral poetry in these countries, as with the later idyllists in Italy, practically abandoned Latin in favour of vernacular verse. Pastoral poetry thus begins a new chapter of its history as a recognised form of modern literature. The "Eclogues" of Clément Marot (1496-1544) mark the opening of this chapter in France. In England, while the "Eclogues" of Alexander Barclay (1475-1552) and of Barnabe Googe (1540-94) call for passing reference on the ground of their priority, the real foundations of the regular pastoral were laid in Spenser's "Shepheardes Calender" (1579). In this poem, as in our Renaissance literature at large, we see how the influence of classicism affected English literature in two ways—directly and indirectly;

* See Farnaby's preface to George Turberville's translation of them, 1567.

directly, as the humanistic spirit was revived by the first-hand study of Greek and Latin writers; indirectly, as it was transmitted by the literatures of Italy and France. It is therefore a point of importance that Spenser's acknowledged masters in the bucolic art are not Theocritus and Vergil only, but also Mantuanus, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Sannazaro, and Marot. The attempt which Spenser makes to break away in one respect from the strict conventions of the pastoral should also be noted. That convention demanded absolute refinement of diction and the repudiation of everything suggestive of the rough realities of rustic speech. Spenser in places employs a strange and rather uncouth kind of language—in part archaic, in part dialectic—which is obviously meant to bring Arcadia nearer to our English fields, and to touch artifice with something of the freshness of truth. Most readers to-day feel, indeed, that such combination of stereotyped machinery with this amount of rustic realism is a mistake; that, in fact, it serves only to make the absurdities of the machinery itself, by contrast, the more glaringly apparent. But our present judgment in the matter goes, for the moment, for nothing. That Spenser should even to this extent have asserted his independence of academic rule, and, while accepting in general the formalism of pastoral poetry, should thereby have sought to effect at least a slight return to nature—that is one point for emphasis. Another is the opposition of the classic theorist to the innovation. That opposition was not based upon the broad æsthetic considerations to which I have just referred. It was inspired wholly by slavish reverence for antiquity, to which, as the educational movements of the Renaissance have already shown us, classicism too often led. Sir Philip Sidney, to whom the "Calender" was dedicated, found

fault with this experiment in style because "neyther Theocritus in Greeke, Virgill in Latin, nor Sanazar in Italian did affect it." Meanwhile the pastoral spirit was for a time so strong that it not only expressed itself directly in the specific bucolic poem, but overflowed into other forms of literature as well. It overflowed into the drama, as in Politian's "Orfeo" (1492), Tasso's "Aminta" (1573), and Guarini's "Pastor Fido" (1590); in Peele's "Arraignment of Paris" (*circa* 1581); in Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess" (1608), and Jonson's "Sad Shepherd" (1637). It thus became one of the elements which combined in the production of that special form of dramatic entertainment which Italian influences made popular in England—the Mask. Pastoralism was also a chief impulse behind the prose fiction of the Renaissance. It inspired Sannazaro's "Arcadia" (1534), the earliest work of its school, and, judged by its generative power, one of the most important. It gave birth to an enormous romantic literature in Spain. It blended with other elements in the production of Sidney's "Arcadia," Lodge's "Rosalynde," and Greene's "Pandosto," and, much later, of the Heroic Romance in France. In strict conformity with classic tradition, pastoral machinery was also used for the purpose of elegy, as in Spenser's "Astrophel" and Milton's "Lycidas." This brief sketch does not exhaust the interest of pastoralism in Renaissance literature. But it will suffice to indicate something of its range and bearings.

Turning next to the whole body of narrative literature in prose and verse, we find that here the direct effect of classicism on method and structure was relatively inconsiderable. In prose, the short tale of the Italian story-tellers and their French and English followers, the fully developed romance, like the

"Arcadia" just mentioned, and the entire breed of Lyly's "Euphues," and such picaresque novels as Nash's "Unfortunate Traveller," were independent excursions into a field in which it would have been useless to look back to Greece or Rome for practical help. In poetic narrative, where plenty of such help might be had for the asking, Renaissance literature still developed freely, and along the general lines of mediæval verse romance rather than those of the Greek and Latin epic. Numerous as are their classical borrowings in detail, there is little trace of formal Homeric or Vergilian influences in such rambling and discursive chivalrous romances as Boiardo's "Orlando Innamorato," for example, or Ariosto's more famous sequel to this, "Orlando Furioso." These things, like the great English poem, which was largely inspired by and fashioned upon them, Spenser's "Faery Queene," have a very complex ancestry; but, so far as fundamentals of structure are concerned, classic example did little to make them what they are. Much critical talk upon the subject, however, naturally turned attention to the exact form of the classic epic, and here and there efforts were made to reproduce this with some degree of precision. In general, as we might expect, the result was a failure, as in the Latin epics on Christian subjects which appeared in Italy, and which were scarcely more than academic exercises, and in Ronsard's unfinished "La Franciade." But occasionally a true poet arose who contrived to put the life of his own genius into long-dead forms. This was done particularly by Camoëns in his "Os Lusiadas" (1572), and by Tasso in his "Gerusalemme Liberata" (1575)—the two European poems which together represent the highest achievement in the true epic revival till we come to "Paradise Lost." Both are constructed upon the

regular epic formula, with the required "supernatural machinery," battles, councils, and episodes. But in both the plot is diversified by a plentiful admixture of materials which, strictly speaking, scarcely harmonise with the design. This is especially the case with the "Gerusalemme," and one of the most suggestive points about it is that, just as Vergil was at his best when he was not imitating Homer, so Tasso was at his best when he was not imitating Vergil. The "epic" part of his poem is correct and dull. It is in virtue of its interwoven stories of a quite romantic and sentimental cast that it keeps its place among literature's abiding things.

Finally, we have to touch upon what is really the most important division of our present inquiry—the part played by classicism in the evolution of the Renaissance drama. I have already pointed out the error of supposing that this drama was entirely a product of the revival of learning. But it was very largely in the school of the ancient playwrights, after all, that the men of the sixteenth century learned their structural principles, and the influences of humanism were therefore of immense importance in the transition from rude experiments to the forms of art. The comedies of Plautus and Terence, and the tragedies of Seneca—subjects of ardent study to begin with by those whose interest in literature was entirely academic—thus presently became things of practical power in the development of the public stage, first in Italy, and then, in part immediately and in part through Italian imitations, in France and England. But while the classical movement must generally be accounted one of the principal factors in the history of the Renaissance drama, it did not by any means operate everywhere with equal force. It was far less effective, for instance, in comedy than in tragedy; for in comedy the popular spirit was strong,

while tragedy in its re-birth was almost wholly scholarly and imitative. Thus, to refer only to our English drama, while our first regular comedy, "Roister Doister," was written by an Eton schoolmaster for performance by his boys in place of the Latin plays then common in all the centres of learning, and while the lines of the plot avowedly follow those of Plautus and Terence, the substance and style are of native origin, and much of the characterisation combines features of the old moralities with those of the Latin comic stage. Tragedy, on the other hand, began with a resolute effort to discard the popular traditions of the earlier drama entirely, and to reproduce with servile accuracy the classical system as represented in its severest form by the plays of the Latin Seneca. But here, more clearly than in any other aspect of Renaissance literature, we note the varying strength of the classic revival. Italy and France accepted Senecan tragedy, with all its apparatus and rules, its chorus, its stately declamation, its total want of action, its absolute rejection of colloquialism, realism and humorous relief, its unities of time, place and action. This was the form adopted in Tassoni's "Sofonisba," the first "regular" tragedy of modern literature, and in Jodelle's "Cléopâtre," the influence of which was soon reinforced by the more successful work of Garnier and Hardy. Our own "Gorboduc" was similarly an attempt to put Senecan tragedy into English dress, and for some years after its production English scholars did their utmost to naturalise this type of play. But, despite their prestige and power, the popular traditions of the English stage and the peculiar qualities of English taste were too much for them, and they failed. From this time onward, the drama in England and the drama in France (that of Italy soon becomes immaterial) pursued entirely different courses.

Though French tragedy modified the strict Senecan convention in many particulars, it remained essentially "classic" in tone and character. In England the "romantic" drama, as it was established by the "university wits" and as it culminated in Shakespeare, repudiated academic authority and developed freely in accordance with its own spirit and needs.

One most important contribution which classicism made to the form of English poetry is none the less suggested at this point, though even here Italy was the intermediary—I mean blank verse. Italian poets in their attempts to adapt classical metres to the conditions of their own tongue had struck out, among other experiments, the unrhymed hendecasyllabic measure which they called *versi sciolti,* or "untied lines." This measure the Earl of Surrey transplanted to English poetry in his version (*circa* 1535) of two books of the "Aeneid," the mere dropping of the light terminal syllable which the constitution of the language made inevitable in Italian turning the hendecasyllabic into our own decasyllabic line. Very little use was made of this importation in non-dramatic poetry till Milton took it up and showed its full possibilities in "Paradise Lost." But with "Gorboduc" it passed at once into the drama, its introduction there being merely a part of the general classicism of the play. Fortunately it was not allowed to disappear with the rest of the machinery of Senecan tragedy, nor was it relegated to the dust-heap with other attempts to naturalise foreign forms in English verse. Marlowe in his "Tamburlaine the Great" in turn gave it to the romantic stage, where its success was immediately assured. We now think of it, indeed, as a characteristic feature of our romantic drama. But we must not forget that it was, in fact, a product of classicism as interpreted by Italy.

In closing this part of our inquiry, I may fittingly lay stress upon two important points.

In the first place, it has become evident that, though humanism did much directly and indirectly to change the spirit and the currents of literature, its main influences are to be sought in the development of technique. Alike by precept and example classicism taught the value of form and beauty, and was thus pre-eminently effective in the evolution of literature as an art. It is at this point particularly, therefore, that we connect the beginnings of modern literature with the revival of learning.

At the same time proof has also been afforded of the statement made at the opening of this chapter that in European Renaissance literature, considered in the mass, differences coexist with general similarities. The history of the classical movement and its effects is very interesting in this context. In England the "Latinisation of culture" (to use Burckhardt's phrase) was never nearly so thorough and complete as in Italy and France. The conjunction of these two names must not indeed mislead us. Classicism meant one thing for Italian literature, and another and quite different thing for French literature. In Italy it was on the whole distinctly unfavourable to vernacular progress. The leading humanists despised their native tongue, sneered at the "Divine Comedy" as a poem "for bakers and cobblers," and from the time of the "Decamerone" till that of the Italian lyrics of Lorenzo de' Medici and Politian gave themselves up to the task of reviving Cicero and Vergil. Then, even when a vernacular movement began, when literature became popular instead of merely scholarly, and when the Florentine Academy solemnly decided that a man of wit and learning might write in Italian without losing caste, classical

influences were still so overpoweringly strong that Italian genius turned all too soon to the cultivation of form and style, and an early decline was the inevitable consequence. In the great literature of the French Renaissance, from Marot and Rabelais at one end to Montaigne and Regnier at the other, the influence of humanism was very different. Instead of checking vernacular effort, the classic revival nourished the national genius, and stirred individual energy; instead of breeding the spirit of slavish pedantry, it gave quickening impulse to originality. Yet while the distinction between Italy and France must be carefully marked, the contrast between both of them and England is far more apparent. For obvious reasons, even France was much nearer than England to the sources of Latin culture. Our English temperament, our social conditions, the force of the national spirit, and the ingrained romantic bias of our race combined to resist the imposition of alien tastes. Thus, though humanism penetrated and pervaded English Renaissance literature through and through, classicism, despite persistent efforts, failed to obtain controlling power over it. In Italy it hampered the free growth of national genius. In France the period of the later Renaissance witnessed the formation of that classical ideal which was to dominate all French literature till the thirties of the nineteenth century. Classicism, one only of the many streams by which English literature was fed, did not become a main stream till the so-called "Augustan" era.

That the classicism of the Renaissance was, as I have already said, fraught for literature with evil as well as with good is now obvious. When humanism co-operated with individual genius, and ancient masterpieces were regarded only as an inspiration and a guide, then the results were wholly excellent; it is indeed to

this co-operation that we owe much that is greatest in Renaissance literature. When healthy admiration degenerated into superstitious veneration, and lifeless copying took the place of personal effort, then humanistic studies only led the emancipated intellect once more back into bondage to the past. Unfortunately the mania for everything antique which at first led scholars all over Europe to Latinise their own names and give Latin names to their children, and later wrought such havoc with education, also brought about the spread of the narrowest pedantry in literature. The enthusiasm for the classics which was a principal cause of the splendid literary outburst of the Renaissance was thus also in large measure responsible for the stagnation which followed with the growth of pseudo-classicism.

V.—THE RELIGIOUS RENAISSANCE AND LITERATURE

It remains for us to consider in what ways and to what extent European Renaissance literature was affected by the religious revival and the intellectual and moral stir by which this was accompanied.

Manifestly, as classicism in the main directly influenced literature as an art, so the religious revival, on the other hand, left its impress chiefly on its spirit, tone, and aims. Yet in one respect it counted also as a factor in the development of literary form. It helped the establishment of a good practical prose style.

This was the natural result of the democratic tendency of Protestantism, its propagandist energies, and—the product of these in combination—its earnest desire to reach beyond the circle of scholarship to the common man. In Germany, though the Reformation was otherwise almost fatal to literature, Luther's translation of the Bible and his miscellaneous religious and

social writings fixed the standard of the language for general use. In France the popular spirit of Protestantism was of great service in breaking down the affectations of literary and aristocratic cliques and substituting a current style having the virtues at least of plainness, directness, and simplicity. The work of the Protestant Marot, the bent of whose genius was strongly against classicism, and who in particular rejected the pedantry of the *rhétoriqueur* school, represents the effects of this popular spirit in verse. In prose it is recognised that Calvin's "Institutes" (in the translation made almost immediately by the author himself from the Latin in which they were first written) were of great importance to French style at a time when it was throwing off its mediæval heritage and evolving into its modern form. But most of all in England are we able to observe what religious activity did for the vernacular. Even Wyclif, it will be remembered, had not only produced an English translation of the Bible, but had also written tractates in plain English that he might appeal broadly to the "vulgar." In the fifteenth century the independent theologian, Reginald Pecock, while falling foul of both Lollards and Churchmen, did yeoman service by enlarging the powers of English for higher exposition and argument. Tyndale's New Testament, directly prompted by and in part based upon Luther's German and Erasmus's Latin versions, also deserves mention among the works which helped to fashion English at a critical juncture in its history, and its interest is the greater because it was afterwards followed so closely by the scholars responsible for the Authorised Translation of the scriptures. More than any other volume ever published, this "greatest monument by far of Jacobean prose" has been a constant force in the shaping of English style, and the special significance of

it from our present point of view lies in the fact that, like the Book of Common Prayer, which also exerted a wide though indirect influence, it was destined not for any one class of the community, but for all sorts and conditions of men, and was therefore couched in a language "understanded of the people." The stress has therefore again to be thrown upon the democratic spirit of Protestantism, and upon the way in which this aided in the establishment of a standard prose which should be in the best sense of both the words at once scholarly and popular.

It is only, however, when we turn from these more superficial things to the consideration of the moral meaning of literature as an interpretation of life, that we are in a position to realise the enormous influence of the religious revival.

Negative evidence of its power is afforded by the literature of Italy. I have already spoken of the paradox of the Italian Renaissance, in which devotion to learning and a passionate love of beauty co-existed with private profligacy and political corruption, and I have pointed out that the worst feature of the case was not the colossal wickedness of a few monsters of iniquity here and there, but the laxity and flippancy which characterised society in general. What Renaissance Italy needed was a spiritual awakening to temper its lust for life, check the conversion of liberty into licence, and give direction to its artistic energies. But the mission of Savonarola failed, and thenceforth sensuality and indifference spread unhindered. The result is seen in the literature of the age. The one prevailing defect of that literature is its want of lofty aim and moral fibre. It has rarely, very rarely, that note of "high seriousness" which Matthew Arnold rightly believed to be one of the essential elements of all enduring greatness in

literature. Its preoccupation with form, upon which we have recently touched, was indeed in part the consequence of its want of "sound subject-matter" and the inspiration of a large and generous purpose. Even the finest scholarship ran to waste in the cultivation of Ciceronian purity in prose and Vergilian perfection in verse, because in a world which comes with an everlasting challenge and stimulus to those who have eyes to see and souls to understand, neither the writer nor his public cared for anything beyond such dilettante trifling. Of the fearful abominations by which a good deal of this Italian Renaissance literature was defiled I need not further speak; my passing reference in an earlier chapter to the effusions of such men as Filelfo, Poggio, Aretino, and Beccadilli will suffice. It is more to the point to dwell for a moment upon the quality of work which we can still read and enjoy. Even in this—even in the poetry of Ariosto, the greatest figure in the Italian literature of the central Renaissance—the moral deficiencies are very apparent. To appreciate these we have only to glance at the most characteristic product of the Italian genius at this time—the chivalrous romance in verse. The foundations of Pulci's "Morgante Maggiore," and of Boiardo's "Orlando Innamorato," and of Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso" are furnished by the old romances of chivalry, and especially by one of the two great legend-cycles of the middle ages—that which had grown up about Charlemagne and his paladins. But of the idealism of chivalry very little remains. Brilliant, vivacious, full of wit and fancy, overflowing with the zest of adventure, these poems have really nothing in them to remind us of the stock from which they sprang, save the names of some of their characters and the groundwork of their plots. To bring out their essential features by contrast we need

not have recourse to that golden book of knight-errantry, Malory's "Morte Darthur." We shall find contrast enough in "Don Quixote," which, burlesque though it is, contains infinitely more of the genuine temper of chivalry than these masterpieces of a totally different order of genius, with their polished irony, their well-bred banter, their pervasive gaiety, and their absolute lack of earnestness and enthusiasm. Ariosto, the most consummate artist in this particular kind of narrative, and one of the most admirable story-tellers in verse the world has ever seen, wrote confessedly to amuse a careless, pleasure-loving, cynical, and degenerate age; he succeeded in his object; and his work inevitably took the tone and colour of his audience. The irony and banter are indeed so prominent in his poem, he is so entirely irreverent in spirit and tendency, that some modern Italian critics have attributed to him the intention of parodying the old romances of chivalry. It is safer to assume that his purpose was simply to adapt excellent legendary material to the mental and moral tastes of his time. But, though no actual parody can be detected in it, such work as his made the transition easy from romantic epic to genuine epic burlesque. Tassoni's "La Secchia Rapita," or "Rape of the Bucket," which turns the machinery and sentiments of the true epic into ridicule by employing them in connection with an absurdly trivial theme, is, like our own "Rape of the Lock," a significant commentary upon the character of the age which produced it; though we must not forget that, again like Pope's mock-heroic, it satirises as well as reflects. A generation earlier the great epic of the devout Tasso had shown the religious stimulus of the Counter-reformation. Of that movement the "Gerusalemme Liberata," indeed, is the one lasting poetic monument. Its central theme—the task

of the first crusade under Godfrey of Bouillon; its presentation of the character of the leader, in whom the qualities of the pious Æneas are curiously blended with those of the new missionary heroes of the Catholic faith; the strenuous religious spirit and the fervent zeal by which it is pervaded: all these things combine to make it a thoroughly typical production. But it is not only typical, it is also unique. It marks both the beginning and the end of the influence of the Catholic reaction on literature.

Turning now from Italy to France, we perceive at once how deeply literature gained by contact with the spirit of the Reformation. The French literature of the Renaissance will not, indeed, bear comparison with the Italian on the side of form and style; but it reveals, on the other hand, a moral vigour and a vital power which amply compensate for any artistic shortcomings, and these great qualities, while traceable in part, of course, to various political and social causes, are, as Mr. Tilley has put it, due "in a large measure to the fact that in France the Renaissance came hand in hand with the Reformation."* At the outset Protestantism was regarded with much favour by many of the great French scholars, like Budé, and intellectual leaders, like Rabelais, who were quick to realise its intimate connection with the general movement for enlightenment and freedom of thought. It was not, indeed, till, with Calvin, dogmatism and bigotry regained their supremacy, and the old despotism of infallibility was re-established in a new form, that humanism definitely parted company with the reformed theology. The change in the relations of the two revivals—the intellectual and the religious—goes far to account for the

* "The Literature of the French Renaissance: Introductory Essay," p. 33.

marked difference in tone between the French literature of the earlier and that of the later Renaissance. But meanwhile, though it touched only the few, the spirit of the Reformation had stirred the best thought of France to its depths, and literature was filled, in consequence, with the strength and passion of life. We feel this, for example, in the magnificent earnestness, the genuine humanitarian enthusiasm, the prophetic ardour and faith which are everywhere present beneath the wild foolery and the reckless indecencies of Rabelais. Mr. Tilley has drawn out an interesting comparison between this great representative figure of the French Renaissance and the great representative figure of the same age in Italy, Ariosto. "How formless! How crude! How gross! How full of cumbersome details and wearisome repetitions is Rabelais! How limpid, how harmonious is Ariosto! What perfection of style, what delicacy of touch! He never wearies us; he never offends our taste. And yet one rises from the reading of Rabelais with a feeling of buoyant cheerfulness, while Ariosto, in spite of his wit and gaiety, is inexpressibly depressing. The reason is that the one bids us hope, the other bids us despair; the one believes in truth and goodness and in the future of the human race; the other believes in nothing but the pleasures of the senses, which come and go like many-coloured bubbles, and leave behind them a boundless ennui. Rabelais and Ariosto," the writer concludes—and this for us is the capital point of the comparison—"are true types of the Renaissance as it appeared in their respective countries."* Energising qualities of faith and moral purpose which are wanting in the Italian give essential greatness to the Frenchman; and the difference between the two is in part the difference between literature

* "Introductory Essay," pp. 38, 39.

untouched and literature touched by the influences of the religious revival.

Yet, as no reader of these pages will need to be reminded, it is in the English literature of the Renaissance period that the power of the religious revival is most fully felt. If it is impossible to understand this literature without constant reference to the whole complex of results which followed the spread of humanism, it is equally impossible to understand it without constant reference to the whole complex of results which followed the Reformation. In saying this I am not, of course, thinking of any influence directly exerted by changes of theological doctrine or ecclesiastical government. I am thinking of the total and indirect effect wrought by the Reformation in the political and moral conditions and temper of English society. To the Englishman of that age the Reformation meant much more than a reconstruction of creed and church. It meant the liberation of his country from the yoke of a foreign potentate in the person of the Pope of Rome. It meant, after a sharp collision with the chief champion of the papal claims and the Catholic reaction, Spain, consolidation of national unity and a tremendous deepening of the national self-consciousness. It meant, in consequence, the enormous growth of the sense of England's greatness and destiny, of patriotism, and of the spirit of enterprise and adventure. The minds of men had been stimulated by the conflict of parties and by all the excitement which had been bred by the religious upheaval, while the comparative peace which came with the settlement under Elizabeth gave them the opportunity—and this, it will be remembered, at a period when France was torn by fierce religious wars—of turning their attention freely to the newly awakened intellectual interests of their time. The common

conscience had also been stirred by the open Bible of Protestantism and the sermons of evangelical preachers; the atmosphere had been charged thereby with fresh emotional elements, and a current of strenuous idealism had been set flowing far and wide among the English people. That England, as Mr. Symonds has said, "received the influences of both Renaissance and Reformation simultaneously," is thus a fact of the most vital importance to the student of our history. It was largely owing to this combination of forces that not only intellectually, but also morally and spiritually, the Elizabethan age was so intensely alive. It is to the same combination of forces, therefore, that we may in the main ascribe that intensity of life which was the outstanding feature of its literature.

We must be careful not to exaggerate the actual moral power of the Reformation over this literature. While the spirit of humanism and the spirit of the religious revival have alike to be reckoned among its formative influences, these two spirits often came into conflict, and their conflict gave rise to those glaring contradictions with which it continually surprises us as we read. No one who knows it in detail will deny that there is much in it to justify the apprehensions of those who watched with alarm the spread of Italian corruption on native soil. At times, as in "Hero and Leander" and "Venus and Adonis" (both of which, it should be noted, enjoyed special vogue on account of their open licentiousness), neo-paganism runs riot in it. At times its passion becomes brutal and its egotism defiant. At times its delight in life and in the things of the senses degenerates into a riot of imaginative extravagance. We have only to turn to the great Elizabethan drama to perceive—and we can, in fact, do this without travelling beyond the pages of Shakespeare—

how often the taste of the age even at its best revelled in motives and fancies which offend us, in crude violence and in gross jesting, from which we now recoil shocked. Elsewhere, as in the typical case of Marlowe, we have the emancipated genius of the age pursuing an erratic course, unguided and unchecked by any controlling sense of moral law.

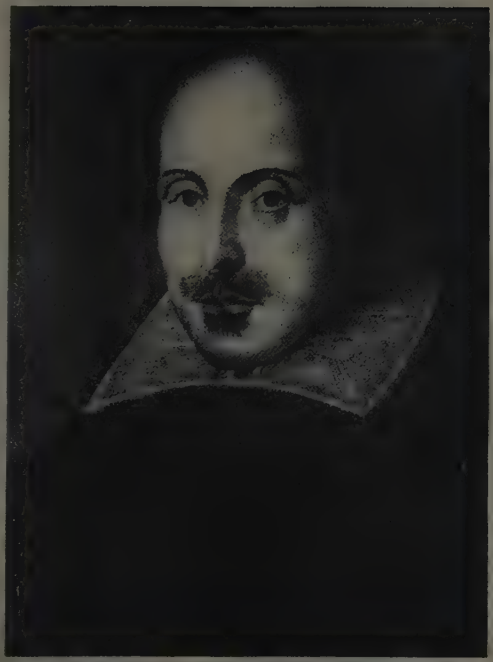
All qualifications made, however, the fact remains that, taken in the mass, English Renaissance literature is a wonderfully healthy minded literature—a literature which, indeed, is often extravagant, fantastic, and even coarse, but which is at the same time fundamentally manly, vigorous, and sound. Very little of the radical depravity or the peculiarly debilitating atmosphere of Italian paganism is anywhere to be detected in it. On the contrary, its general spirit is bracing; it shows a steady realisation of moral values; it rings true to the great issues of life. These characteristics are explained by the application of Taine's triple formula of race, environment, and moment. English Renaissance literature is the expression of the genius, energies, and ideals of a robust race in a mood of intellectual, moral, and spiritual exaltation.

At this point stress should be laid upon the profound historical interest of the work of Spenser. He is pre-eminently the representative poet of the English Renaissance, his relations with which are strikingly similar to those of Tennyson, three centuries later, with the civilisation of the Victorian era. All the great influences of the age met and blended in him, and that wonderful creation, "The Faery Queene," was the product of their harmonious co-operation. It is steeped in humanism. It draws much of its inspiration from the classics and Italy. The love of sensuous beauty in nature, in art, in woman, is one of its salient charac-

teristics. The teachings of Greek masters—of Aristotle and most of all of Plato, whom the poet had studied mainly through Ficino's commentary—are conspicuous elements in its texture throughout. It joins with the scholar's knowledge of and devotion to pagan literature the Protestant's familiarity with and reverence for the Bible. It supports the cause of the English Church and expounds its theology. The ardour of the Reformation sweeps through its pages, and its religious spirit is uncompromising and often rancorous. It overflows with patriotism, with love of England and hatred of England's enemies—Rome and Rome's allies—and with romantic loyalty to England's queen. Its moral tone is lofty and strenuous, and the chivalrous machinery of Ariosto, whom Spenser set himself to "overgo," instead of being used for amusement only, is loaded with didactic purpose, and made the allegorical vehicle of an ethical philosophy which itself incorporates the humanistic with the Protestant ideal. In consonance, moreover, with the positive temper which the Reformation did so much to foster, that philosophy is directed to large practical ends. The poet does not seek to "justify the ways of God to men." In the true spirit of an age which found its greatest theological thinker in Hooker and its greatest master of method in Bacon, he makes it his object "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." It is not the least noteworthy thing about his palace of dainty devices that, built though it seems to be in dreamland, it has windows which open upon the broad highways of the world.*

Spenser holds his place unchallenged, therefore, as

* The practical temper of the Elizabethan age, its "profound interest in reality as opposed to abstractions," and its "rich feeling for concrete fact," have been well brought out by Professor Dowden. See his "New Studies in Literature," pp. 445-6. Their connection with the general movement of the Renaissance will now be clear.



William Shakspeare

the poetical interpreter of the complex forces which shaped the life of Elizabethan England. Yet it was not, after all, in narrative poetry, nor in any other purely literary form of art, that the genius of Renaissance England found its fullest expression. It was—and the fact itself is significant—in the romantic drama. Here Shakespeare, too, becomes representative. We have only to brush away all the accumulations of critical nonsense about his "universality" and his independence of time and place, to see him as essentially a man of his age. His scholarship was meagre, and as his was evidently one of those completely artistic natures to which speculative questions and spiritual interests make little appeal, religion was of small account in moulding his genius. But his curiously assimilative mind absorbed all the influences which were at work about him, and humanism and the moral vigour of the Reformation alike gave form and pressure to his plays. Narrow in patriotism, yet catholic in sympathy and singularly flexible in judgment, intensely alive to the pathos and beauty and no less to the sin and ugliness which make up the mingled yarn of human life, at once idealistic and sensual, romantic in temper, yet full of the sturdiest common sense, he does indeed epitomise many of the qualities which gave its distinctive character to the vehement, virile, many-sided Elizabethan age. About him, as about his generation, much of the old order still clung; he was often cramped by its traditions, hampered by its prejudices, and entangled in its superstitions. His limitations, which are frequently as surprising as his general breadth of outlook, are therefore historically even more instructive than this. But, like his generation, he belongs emphatically to the season of re-birth and the great period of transition. Nor, as I need hardly add, is his importance

merely national. He holds the paramount place in the literature of the Renaissance in general. His position in the history of creative achievement is, in fact, analogous to that of his foremost contemporary in the history of thought. In Bacon, as we have seen, the intellectual movements of the European revival culminated. In Shakespeare we have the crowning incarnation of its imaginative genius. The one stands for the scientific interpretation of nature; the other for the dramatic interpretation of life; the one for the literature of knowledge; the other for the literature of power. Each in his own way supreme, they together represent, and with a fullness found nowhere else amid all the varied activities of contemporary Europe, the twofold significance of the Renaissance as the discovery at once of the world and of man.

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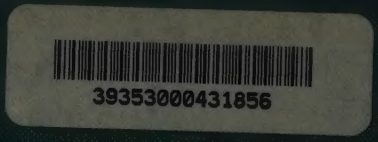
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